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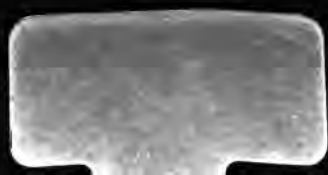
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A SERVICE OF ANGELS.

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A

SERVICE OF ANGELS

BY

REV. HENRY LATHAM, M.A.

MASTER OF TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE;
AUTHOR OF "PASTOR PASTORUM," ETC.

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1894

"For though we hold indeed the objects of sense to be nothing else but ideas which cannot exist unperceived ; yet we may not hence conclude they have no existence except only while they are perceived by us, since there may be some other spirit which perceives them though we do not."

Bishop BERKELEY, *Of the Principles of the Human Mind*, Part I. sect. 42.



PREFACE.

IT will be seen at a glance that this book is not a purely theological work. I have tried to make it easy reading, for I want my notions to become familiar; and though it may be observed that a current of Berkeley is running underground, I have kept philosophy out of sight¹. The subject of Angel ministry has of late years fallen out of notice; and that to a degree which is somewhat strange, considering how frequently, by Our Lord's shewing, it is through the "sending of Angels" that the Father's purposes are carried out.

¹ I have used the word "mode" in Chap. II, not as Berkeley does when he says "extension is a mode or attribute," but in its familiar sense, meaning, How, or in what way, a thing exists. In case a young reader should look into Berkeley, I commend to him Mr Lewes' remark, "Because we can only know objects as ideas, is it a proper conclusion that objects only *exist* as ideas?" *Biographical Hist. of Philosophy*. G. H. Lewes.

It is of no use trying to persuade people to take this or that view about Angels so long as they do not much care whether such beings exist or not. If you want to give people a belief you must first make them wish to believe it. What I have aimed at therefore here, is to make people feel that they would be glad if Angels were about them, as I say they are. I dwell principally on the practical outcome of this belief. I say for instance that to fancy ourselves ever before the eyes of a host of Angels will lead us to try and shew ourselves at our best ; and that the belief that Angels survey our acts, catching eagerly at anything that may tell of good in the actor, will make us turn towards them, as a man, worn by the strife and evil-judging of the world, turns to the safe haven of his home. I find too a moving responsibility in the thought, that we men, walking this earth of ours, bear part in brightening or bedimming the Angels' joy. This thought may quicken into energetic life some who were growing languid, and were laying the

blame of their languor on the lack of an object of veritable worth.

I took up this subject soon after "Pastor Pastorum" was out of my hands. I meant it for a sort of holiday work and promised myself that I would let my thoughts go their own way and find their own clothing of style. These same thoughts took me, before long, to what Our Lord said about Angels, and I soon found myself doing my old work of exposition very much in my old way. When I came on Our Lord's answer to the Sadducees and His words about the children's Angels, I could not but treat these passages fully, more so perhaps than the immediate occasion of my book required, and I am aware that Chapters III and IV read like additions to my former work.

I have supposed Angels to be rendered happy, consciously happy, by the sight of the well-being of creatures who are happy without knowing it; and I point out that hereby they transmute the unconscious happiness of dumb things, or of certain human

beings, into conscious happiness of their own. They may acknowledge that they have been made happy by what they have seen, and may thank God for being allowed the sight.

The distinction between these two kinds of happiness may require more consideration than can be given to it in a book like this. The point I most want to mark is this. Although people may very possibly be happy without ever thinking whether they are happy or not—a condition which is in fact that of most animals, of young children in general, and also of the great majority of the grown population during large portions of their lives—yet no one can be *unhappy* without knowing it: *unhappiness* of its very nature involves self-consciousness. This, I take it, is what the pessimists have in their minds when they say that it is pain which is the positive thing, and that pleasure only means relief from something that is disagreeable. It is true that people are not always aware of a happiness that flows evenly on, but of

pain they must be sensible or else it would not be pain.

In some cases, we become for a moment conscious of having been happy unconsciously, and wonder that we had not found our happiness out. For instance a patient, suddenly set free from continued pain, becomes, through the sharp contrast, conscious for a moment of the happiness that lies in mere living; this is why, the cessation of pain brings positive pleasure; as everyone knows it does: again, when a home has to be left—a home perhaps which we had counted rather dull—we may first become fully conscious of the happiness we have experienced there without ever giving it a thought.

But as soon as you make a man self-conscious, you give him the capacity for being unhappy, and this capacity he is sure to find occasion to use. A man may be going on well enough till you tell him how happy he is. This makes him turn his thoughts inward, and it is ten to one but he finds something to vex himself about there.

I have studiously tried to keep clear of the wide questions, of moral evil in the world, about which I have said my say in *Pastor Pastorum*, and of that of possible evil and deterioration among the angels themselves. Something will be found on this subject in the second edition of Archbishop Whately's book referred to on page 34. Such a subject could not be discussed in a book intended to be of the size and character of this. I had meant to have said somewhere, that if the wills of Angels are free, and they are short of perfection, as we believe them to be, they cannot remain morally and intellectually unchanged. Development of some kind there must be, and if it do not tend towards perfection, as a limit never quite to be reached, deterioration is likely to ensue.

This peep of ours into the Angel world, may, at any rate, save us from fancying that the world was made only for man and his concerns. One among the purposes of our peopled globe may be this, that it should offer to the spiritual host, a sphere for interest and the

play of faculty, leading them thereby away from themselves and furthering their advance.

It was as "perceptive intelligences," giving to phenomena that sort of reality which comes of their being present to a mind, that Angels came into my head ; but in Scripture they are represented not at all in this aspect, but as messengers carrying into effect the government of God. I have only permitted myself to speak of one kind of Angel operation ; not that there may not be an infinity of others, but because the consideration of the mode of action I name is less beset by difficulties and objections than the rest. There is no ground for supposing that Angels have any independent power, and there are strong objections to any such view, but I suppose that they may let drop into men's minds thoughts and impressions which may be noticed or dismissed as the hearers please. What the Angels of God are allowed to whisper we may suppose to come from God.

He, we find, works in general, not immediately, but through *means*, and one form of

His communications with men may be that of an Angel's whisper. God has never, we are told, left men "without a witness," and through Angels, possibly, this witness may have come.

I like to believe that God's revelation of Himself is going on as effectively now as ever it did. It may take fresh forms in order to meet fresh needs of men ; it would be likely to come, I think, as revelations have come before, in such a shape that those might reject it who would ; we should expect also to find it always given with reserve, never leading men to think that the whole of a matter was laid before them at once. These characteristics of revelation are met with in science as well. May not the discoveries of science, physical and natural, be among God's ways of unveiling Himself to these times of ours ? May not the thoughts, coming of a sudden, which have seemed to win into order a chaos of observed measurements and facts, have been due to the permitted whisper of an Angel of God ? See p. 184.

I have added to the book proper an Apologue, which has a kind of preface to itself.

In the course of my subject the notion of infinity comes into view, and I have therefore appended a note on "infinite" and "infinitesimal" magnitudes, thinking it might be acceptable to some of my readers (see p. 205). I have also tried to explain, in the note to the Apologue, what is meant by saying that Angels are not subject to the "limitations of time and space."

This book, as has been said, was not meant to be didactic, and the conclusions, such as they are, which have been arrived at about Angels lie strewn about it. In order, then, to help the reader who may wish, at the end, to see what it is that he has been told, I have put together a sort of catalogue of such conclusions. This, for want of a happier title, I have had to call an "Index-Summary of the Angelology" contained in the book.

I have drawn frequent illustrations from Natural History and the like. I need hardly

say that I do not maintain them to be in accord with the latest words of science. I have also made free use in the Apologue of that convenient hypothesis, "a vibratory ether;" but though the Angel in the story speaks of it as though he knew all about it, I claim no such knowledge for myself.

I have to thank several friends for very kind services and suggestions and references, which have helped me in writing this book.

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ERRATA.

- p. 9, line 7, for "such" read "sheer".
- p. 23, line 16, for "and the" read "and of the".
- p. 26, line 5 from bottom, insert " after "with us?"
dele " at bottom of page.
- p. 35, line 11, insert "(the cherubims are mentioned,
Gen. iii. 24)".
- p. 89, line 4 from bottom, for "them" read "children".
- p. 142, line 2, for "one's mind" read "our minds".
- p. 182, line 9, for "just" read "first".

pages on which the city is built, and at the junction of which its chief buildings stand. A tongue of orchard valley ran up between these ridges into the heart of the city, and the vines and the fig-trees reached to the low wall which bordered the road. Looking

across this at the noble view of the arm of the city which stretches along the south-eastern ridge, I caught sight of a lizard lying in the sunniest nook of the broken coping of the wall. He was a glorious green lizard with golden rims to his eyes, presenting the very image of passive animal enjoyment as he lay curled up, blinking and basking in the sun. It was not only the lavish wealth of beauty showered on the creature—a wealth of colour and curve, and of the nameless grace that goes with living things,—it was not this only that fastened my attention and made me stop on my way; but what struck me in especial was the perfect complacency, the ideal of animal well-being, which the creature seemed to exhibit.

There was in his happiness something radiant which set up happiness in me; and I asked myself, would this power of spreading delight have been lost, would it have lain idle and been barren of result if no one had come that way? Moreover judging of lizard-happiness, by such varieties of happiness as I have known, I should have said that more than half of the enjoyment due under the

circumstances was suffered to escape, owing to the lizard not being conscious of it. I suppose now, said I mentally, that you never turn round and say to yourself, "How delightful all this is? How happy I am?" You don't get beyond the present, do you? I mean, (I felt here that I was talking over the head of my company) you don't look forward to the snooze that you will have here tomorrow when the sun is again on the wall, and will never look back on this change from your long seclusion in a cranny of rock to the sweet air and sunshine, as a specially bright time in your life. While I was speculating as to whether he understood how happy he was, the creature drowsily opened one eye: this he soon shut, and then opened the other a little wider. He was not quick to take offence, for I remained strictly motionless, a compliment which wild animals always appreciate; but my fixed gaze did not quite square with his code of manners: there was something in his air which suggested I should move on, and, as I was slow in so doing, he opened both eyes, and giving me a look which seemed to say, "Well, if you won't go, I

must," promptly undid himself—for he was all tied up in a knot—and was over the wall in a moment.

My head began to run on the apparent waste of happiness arising from the creature not knowing how happy he was, and also on the way in which, owing to the accident of my coming by, part of his happiness had been arrested, as it were, while on its way to escape out into space, and had been annexed to my mental possessions by becoming settled in my memory—thus preserving its existence in mine. Occupied with these thoughts, I went homeward through the Porta Pispini, past the neglected palaces among which the narrow streets turn and twist, till I came out on the Piazza del Campo into the full blaze of day.

This semi-circular area was thronged with children just let loose from school; they were shouting and laughing and tumbling one over the other in the exuberance of their glee. They served to carry my train of thought forward from mere physical happiness to a happiness that was partially conscious of itself, and might be linked with goodness, as will presently appear.

A few relatives of the children, mothers apparently, and elder sisters, were sitting on the steps of the pinnacled palaces, or on the stone staircase which leads up to the main street. Some of these drew their children to them, and were evidently made happy by their happiness; so that the unconscious joy of the infant was translated, as it were, into the conscious joy of the mother, and became a remembrance enriching her life. Thus much, then, was stored away and preserved. Was all the rest "dissipated," in the scientific sense of the term? Some of the children, indeed, were old enough to recollect something, and might carry with them into later life a sanctifying memory of the golden age of childhood, when the weather was always bright—for our early memory only records bright days—and when affectionate protection was always at hand.

But to return to the parents; they were made happy by their children's happiness, and they blessed God, I hoped, as well for their happiness as their own. And so this joy of the children spread in all directions like scattered light, and was caught up and

passed on again by beholders—and if there did not chance to be any such upon the earth, still, it seemed to me, that there might be Angels gazing down with eager eyes from on high—until, in the course of its reflections gladdening many on its way, it should be brought to its final focus in the glory of God. This registration, so to say, in the bosoms of immortal beings, of all happiness and goodness that blossoms on earth, is the main thing I am going to write about.

I singled out an urchin of perhaps eight years old, who was staggering under the load of a swaddled baby, and I asked him if he did not find the weight as much as he could carry. But he kissed the child, and said that he was not tired a bit, the baby was so good. I felt that I should have lost something if I had passed him without a word.

As far as the urchin himself was concerned, this nascent goodness would bear its own fruits. He would grow up, unless cruelly warped by circumstances, a kindly man with a happy nature, and would shed goodness and kindness around. But my thoughts ran on the happiness which the perceiving of the

child's lovingness caused in me; this apparently would not have been called into existence if no one had come that way. Could it be left to accident whether this amount of positive good came into existence or not? Surely I thought there must be Spiritual Beings in the universe on the look out to discover and to harvest all the good that is in it?

So, as I went along, and while I lay awake that night at the hotel, I got a more and more distinct idea of this possible function of Heavenly Beholders, who should gather up the fragments of this reflected happiness and of human goodness, so that nothing should be lost. I put down a few notes while the impression was strong upon me, and this chapter is the result. If there are no Heavenly Beholders, then where human witnesses fail, as must be most commonly the case, the happiness of all little children and animals, as well as much of the happiness and goodness of grown people, is so far wasted that it soon passes out of mind and fails to generate in others that joy or goodness which it was calculated to produce in

spectators. But it is not like what we know of God's ways, that any good should miss its mark ; the candle that is lighted is not hidden away. Neither Christ's word nor any other of the manifold agencies of God were meant to be put aside in a cupboard. But how many of the most nobly heroic of human acts may have been performed where there was no one to witness them, or where none survived to tell the tale ? The self-sacrifice and unflinching devotion to duty displayed on the sinking ship, and in the blazing mine, make us, when we hear of them, bless God that he has left in man such traces of Himself. As much, or more, heroism has been shown no doubt in the cases of which no record is preserved as in those of which we know. Are then all these lessons, all these occasions of giving glory to God, like noble works of Art which have been tossed aside as soon as they were produced, and never gladdened the eye of man ?

It cannot be that it is all the same as though these deeds had never been wrought. If we are sure of anything, we are sure of that. It gives us a moral shudder to suppose

that such heroism was doomed to blank annihilation. Something within me revolts at the idea of such waste in the spiritual world ; it seems so entirely at variance with the tendency of our views of the ways of God. Physical science will not patiently tolerate such waste in its own domain, it looks to see the elements apparently wasted recombined in some serviceable way. Natural philosophers have often to admit that some kind of energy seems dissipated, but they expect to account for more and more of it the closer they look, so that where waste appears in their systems, it only stands like a *terra incognita* on the map, to invite adventurers to acquaint themselves more fully with the spot.

Without carrying my readers into the domain of philosophy, although now and then we may skirt its borders, thus much may be laid down: Beauty must have some one to perceive it who knows what beauty is, or else its very existence is null ; and goodness and happiness, over and above being blessings to their possessors, exhale moral beauty, which only intelligent beings—beings that are “finely touched”—can adequately perceive.

To my mind, then, for all that is good in the material world to reach its goal, there must be in the universe Spiritual Existences looking on all things and into all hearts, discerning goodness and happiness in living beings with most penetrating eye, and sympathising with them in the liveliest way.

At this point I asked myself (what the reader will probably ask too), How does the idea of the intervention of Angels do for us anything that the acknowledged fact of God's omnipresent love and care does not effect? Inasmuch as God is everywhere at once, He must see everything; and inasmuch as He is the fountain of all love, He must care for us more than any Angels possibly can. Why should we not be content with this, of which we are assured? Why do we want to imagine beings more within our own range, on whom our thoughts can rest? To this query I think I should have answered, "Why, indeed?" had not certain words of our Lord come upon me with a force that I had never perceived in them before. The words were these: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one

sinner that repenteth" (*Luke* xv. 10). The Angels of God then, it appears, *are* ever on the watch, marking what goes on in every man's heart, and delighting in every motion of good which they detect. If man can cause joy to the Angels of heaven, can he dream of any goal of existence better worth reaching and more sufficing than this?

The verse just quoted closes the Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver, which tells us, among other things, that the sinner, though gone astray, really belongs to God and His Angels all the time. But the point of most importance for my end is that our Lord here supposes the Angels to be engaged in contemplating the doings of men.

God, of course, stands behind the Angels, and, we may suppose, prompts their whispers to men's hearts. He is not shut out from us by the intervention of Angels, only the thought of them helps us in representing to ourselves God ministering to us in matters which we should (unwisely, of course) have been apt to think too small for God's concern. Scripture speaks of Angels so often that we must suppose that the notion of their inter-

vention—a familiar one in old days—was one that carried profit with it. This and other reasons have induced me to see what lessons could be drawn from a living belief, that the Angels of God are regarding us “with larger, other eyes than ours,” that our happiness adds to theirs, and that good or evil brought to light in us carries joy or sorrow to them.

The course I propose to take furnishes me with a less familiar topic than that all that passes in the universe is seen and known of God; and consequently I may get the ear of some who have heard of that so often, that they take it for granted, I fear sometimes without warrant, that what has so repeatedly fallen on their ears must have found its way to their minds. They are like the possessors of grand treasures of art—statues or pictures pregnant with beauty or insight—who, though they are proud of them, yet pass them by, day after day, in their galleries without even lifting their eyes; they are content with knowing that they are there. This reason goes for something, because I am going to give this subject a practical turn.

But the main argument for giving promi-

nence to the notion of Angelic Beholders is that there are men who will let their thoughts rest on Angelic visitants, but whose spiritual imagination is not such that they can picture God concerning Himself in their daily lives. They are equal to the conception of a finite being, while they are lost at the idea of an infinite one. We can picture the Angels as sorrowing for human misdoings and being indignant at wrong,—indeed, we can hardly suppose them to delight in good without grieving at evil; and we may without error, as far as I know, even suppose that Angels grow in wisdom or spiritual excellence of some sort, as the result of what they witness, but we have not, as far as I recollect, any warrant in our Lord's own words for attributing to the Father any other human affections than Love. The Old Testament writers speak of Him as repenting, and jealous, and wroth, meaning that His acts were such as those of men might be under the influence of those affections; but this anthropomorphism, as it is called, is very cautiously used, if at all, by our Lord. In the verse of St Luke just quoted, our Lord

does not say that joy is caused to God, but only to the Angels; for God's joy is infinite, and when a thing is infinite you cannot make it greater or less by any measurable amount that you may add or withdraw¹; but that of the Angels may be made greater or less. The Angel Host become cognisant of this repentance of the sinner, and joy is diffused among all, just as a brilliant light might illumine the countenances and vivify the hearts of those on whom it shone.

This reacts upon men. We find in this "Joy in the presence of the Angels of God" a glimpse of that "Good Absolute" which so many have painfully sought after, just as the knight of King Arthur's court went in quest of the "Holy Grail." To add to the happiness of immortal beings of sensibility more exquisite than ours, so that this added mite of happiness, surviving in their immortality, should endure for ever—this is something which is a good *of* itself and *in* itself, and not because it tends to bring anything else about. It is a goodness in which we may rest, a goodness which has found its goal.

¹ See Appendix Note A.

And if "by keeping our spirit to that flight" we could lay hold and keep hold of this, then we should secure a fixed point—the great thing we *desiderate* in the moral universe—for a pivot on which our systems might turn.

Possessing this, we could face the crowd of querists, who croak forth, "Who will show us any good?" and with a smile of triumph we could point to the cleft in the cloud through which comes the gleam of an Angel's wing.

The thought that we, each one of us—small as our capacity may be—in all that we do, and in all our inward changes of feeling and thought, are objects of the keenest interest to hosts of Spiritual Personalities; the feeling that we are, and cannot help being, sources of joy or of comparative sorrow to immortal beings, in whose memory this joy or grief remains embedded; immortal beings, we may say, who possibly—though here we float away into realms that leave scope for imagining—find in following the turnings of our minds, in the analysis of our hearts and the discernment of our spirits, an occupation congenial to their nature, and one which may be

the field appointed for the exercise of some of their powers—this thought, I say, while it wakens in us a new sense of responsibility and awe, gives us, at the same time, a higher kind of care for ourselves. Tennyson makes his hero say that if he were beloved, “then he would be to himself more dear,” and that all the common routine of his daily life would be endued with an interest which it had not hitherto known. In like manner, if we believe that the Angels of God love us, and take a lively and affectionate interest in our doings, as we do in those of our children—now delighting and now grieving, but saved from desponding, where we might despond, by being able “to see the end and know the good,” less imperfectly than the wisest men ; and if, while living here on earth, we are all the while able to add to the Joy in Heaven, or cause sorrow there, then we must become more precious in our own eyes, knowing that we can bring about more imperishable effects than we had dreamt of before.

I am not going to plunge into mysteries. I am not going to prove anything at all. I only hope to be of a little practical use. By

good luck I may touch a nerve in some who are benumbed by pessimistic coxcombs, and galvanize them into fresh life. I am not going to try and paint a picture of Spiritual Existence,—for I possess only such colours as our eyes can discern, and am governed by rules of perspective framed upon earth. But if I can make manifest to my readers one more secret of their own hearts—viz. that they are craving after something good in itself, only regarding other things as good, so far as they bring them nearer to that, and if, pointing to Joy in Heaven I can say, “The Good Absolute you are looking for lies that way, you can see the glow of it:”—or if in any ways my peep into the Angel-world should startle into energy some who are lying listlessly about, and whom doubts, real or affected, are robbing of their heritage as Children of God, then—well, then something will have come of the Lizard that blinked and basked on the wall outside Siena in April, 1885.

CHAPTER II.

MY readers now know how it was that the impression took hold of me out of which these pages come. I could not bear to think that the drama of the world was being played without audience, without spectators, with no one to care what went on. I felt that much that makes life what it is only comes into being by touch with the mind of a perceiver.

This perceiver, of course, is God—we own that God sees us. There seems to be something in the way in which men's minds are made which, as to the main bare *fact*, makes agreement about this easy. But all this agreement is shattered and thrown to the winds as soon as we ask, How is this perception carried on? Here we come upon the *mode*, and this every race and every generation and, indeed, every school of thought

fashions for itself. It is well for men to have this to do—only do not let them confound that which is the work of their hands—the casket as it were—with the intuition descending from heaven, which the casket is meant to enshrine.

To return to my matter. One class of minds looks on God as an Intelligence pervading space, and directing all Himself; another, marking how men are wrought on by instruments—by circumstances, by the words of a friend or thoughts in a book—says, We find intermediate agency employed in determining human action; may it not be God's way to carry on His perception by means of intermediaries as well?

I allow that those natures are highest and happiest who, rising at once into the pure serene, can bask, as it were, in the presence of the Spirit of God and of Christ. Rightly judging of God's infinity, they do not fear that He cannot spare attention for what is minute and so they do not look on the little matters of daily life and observation as too small for Him to notice Himself. Happy are such as these. But, though seeing no

place for Angels' *ministry*, it may gladden their hearts to think that Heavenly Witnesses, ever by, are delighting in the good they discern.

With the great mass of mankind, however, it requires an unwonted effort of mind to dwell on so vast an abstraction as the idea of God; and many, in consequence, turn with eagerness to the thought of intelligences intermediate between God and themselves, infinite in some capacities but finite in others, susceptible of joy and sorrow, and sympathising with the affections of earthly life.

On my laying the matter of the foregoing pages before some friends, they told me that I had struck a chord of comfort and that they were listening for more. It was no easy matter to settle how to proceed, but, after much doing and undoing, I made up my mind that my best plan would be to keep true to the notion called up by the lizard basking in the sun—the notion that Heavenly Beholders are everywhere about—hoping so to treat it as to bring peace to some that are troubled, and a sort of spiritual companionship to some who feel lonely in the world.

Here I call the reader's attention to the fact that I regard Angels in this book of mine as *witnesses* or messengers only, not as disposing agents at all.

The idea of Angels, as has been said, was not that which first came into my mind. What originally impressed me was the conviction that goodness and happiness could not be wasted for want of a perceiver or perceivers, and I adopted the notion of Heavenly Beholders because it seemed in general accordance with what Scripture tells us, and served well as a working hypothesis to set men's thoughts going in the direction I wished. But when I occupied myself seriously with the thought it worked its way into my mind, and I have now come to think that the belief in Heavenly Witnesses, round about us, may have a solid groundwork of truth.

This notion which underlies all my work—the notion, I mean, that much in the world would not fully accomplish its ends if no one were conscious of it—may not be understood by everybody merely from what has been said; and so I shall devote a paragraph or two expressly to the point, fabricating an

imaginary situation to illustrate the matter in hand.

I lay my scene far back in geological time when sentient life was found only in its lowest forms ; plants however I suppose that there were, and that one sort, flourishing greatly in the sand of the shore, threw out in abundance binders, that were long and trailing and tough. Round a stone, hollowed and conchlike and tapering, lying on the beach, these binders had wound themselves, coil beside coil, and having strung themselves tight they had rudely fashioned an *Æolian* harp. Across the chords of this passed fitfully the breezes from the bay. The strings were made to vibrate, undulations passed from end to end of the varying lengths of chord, some of which chanced to be adjusted, as to length, as those of a lute might be. If then we had been there to hear, we should have been conscious of musical notes. But all this took place, I suppose, where no ear was by to catch the vibrations, or if such an organ there were, no mind behind the ear to distinguish a note from a noise. Can it then be said that music came into existence at all ?

Pulsations of air would undoubtedly exist, but this would be all. Music there could not be, for music comes only of mind. To call into being this music, three things there must be. We must have pulsations suited to the ear, and an ear suited to the pulsations, and behind the ear a mind equipped with the capacity for discerning musical notes. All these requisites must be present at once. So it is with physical beauty as well. The eye must appreciate all the tints of the flowers—it is not every eye that can—and there must be a mind behind the eye to note their harmony and to catch also their grace of shape, marking the exquisite curves of the droop of the flower stem and the curl of the leaf. So long as these objects remain unperceived they constitute only the makings of beauty; but no sooner does the conscious perception of an intelligent observer light upon them, than beauty in fulness of existence leaps into being, as though an electric action had come into life by a touch.

Now goodness and the happiness that springs from it form one variety of beauty, and as beauty cannot fully exist unless in the

presence of a mind alive to the beautiful I like to suppose that such a mind is present everywhere.

Since I presuppose no dialectical acquirements in my readers, it may be well that I should be explicit about all that savours of the scholastic, and I will therefore say something prefatory on another point, namely, the contrast of *fact* and *mode* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

The distinction of *fact* and *mode* comes into view in this matter of Angels, and will appear in other questions of which we shall get a side view as we go along. What I mean is this. There are truths which greatly concern us as spiritual beings, about which we can say "This is," acknowledging the *fact*, but about which we cannot answer the question "How is this?" which comes to saying that we cannot represent to ourselves the *mode*.

I have taken for granted that we find no difficulty in admitting the fact of the existence of Angels, that is to say of intelligences intermediate between God and man ; but we can arrive at no conclusions as to the way in which they "live and move and have their being."

This distinction, instanced in the matter before us, comes also into notice in most of the great problems of our spiritual life, such, for instance, as the existence of a personal God or of a future life for ourselves. We can form just sufficient idea of these truths to be able to accept them as *facts*, and as long as they remain bare facts we find considerable agreement in the acceptance of them ; but directly we get beyond the fact and set about representing to ourselves *how* God may be everywhere at once, or *why* He, being perfect, should have admitted imperfection into His works, then we lose our footing and there is no longer agreement among men. If we should draw out an ingenious scheme it might greatly please ourselves but it would probably please nobody else. Hence this distinction of *fact* and *mode* goes along with unity and dissension in many matters of belief. If we would remain content with apprehending as *facts*, that which God has revealed about Himself, we might often all be at one ; but if we insist on representing to ourselves the *mode*—saying, God exists in such or such a way—and, more particularly, if we insist upon

other people accepting our representation of this mode, then come secessions, splitting of Churches, heresies and sects. To show what I mean I will instance our Lord's statements of His union with the Father, more particularly those given in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of St John. These are statements of *fact*. The many theories about what was called "the hypostatical union," which convulsed the Church in the 4th and 5th centuries, arose from human efforts to frame ideas of the *mode* of this union and to impose them upon men. I may remark too on the severe restriction to primary fact in the Almighty's declaration to Moses of the name of the Lord, "I am that I am¹." There is nothing of *mode* here, the fact of supreme existence is all in all.

Again the belief in the fact that Christ is with us, binds us together and makes us members of His Church ; but as soon as we try to settle "How He is with us ? whether through this visible organisation or that ; or whether by means of any visible organisation at all, then we shiver this Unity into splinters ; for *modes* are many, though the *fact* be one."

¹ Exodus iii, 14. See marginal readings in the Revised Version.

Some think it a matter for wonder that we should not be able to conceive distinctly what seems to them so essential for right religious views ; but, for my part, I am more surprised that we *should* have such an apprehension of matters so remote from our experience as to be able to entertain the idea of them as facts, and to talk about them with other men.

We can admit as a fact that God is a Spirit, equally present at every spot, so that space is to Him of no account, and also that He is eternal, living in an everlasting present, so that with Him time goes for nothing. But how can we picture to ourselves such a mode of being, we, who are limited to a spot and a moment, whose lives and ways and forms of thinking are fashioned by this same space and time—we, whose every motion involves the notion both of one and the other ? How can we guess at the mode in which God, for whom space and time are as nothing, views the phenomena amid which we exist ?

When I see theological writers, or poets or artists, trying to depict Angels or Deities of any kind, I am not surprised that their

pictures should turn out to be representations of men a little exaggerated on this side or that, for I ask myself, How could they have done otherwise, seeing they had only men and women as models to draw from in the school where they learned to portray? To assign to God a *mode* of our own devising is to reverse the procedure of the first book of Genesis and make God in the image of man.

What does set me wondering and keep me wondering is, to find that we *can* conceive enough about certain abstractions sufficiently to regard them as existent realities, while there are cognate ones which we *cannot* conceive. For instance, though we can conceive existence without *end*, we can hardly conceive it without *beginning*. The average student can imagine, or thinks he can, a line produced to infinity, but it must start from a point on the paper under his eye; and I have never met with anyone who could form any idea of existence, when his personality was diffused¹.

I have asked myself, How is it and Why

¹ See Appendix, Note B.

is it that in this field of abstractions we can entertain some conceptions and not others? Upon what grounds has the selection been made? Why are we fitted up only to play certain tunes?

Can it be that capacities for conception are given us corresponding to something in our destination as immortal souls? Can it be, for instance, that we can conceive existence without end but not without beginning because we may ourselves have no end, but are all aware of having had a beginning? May it be that individual personality is of the essence of our being? These particular conceptive capacities may be granted us in order that we may familiarise ourselves with ideas essential to our education for eternal life; while, when we apply our minds to what is only a toy of curiosity, the machinery refuses to work. If there be truth in this, a curious consequence may ensue. We may, perchance, by scrutinising our possibilities of intuitive conception, light upon hints as to some of the possibilities of our future spiritual life.

These loftier matters do not lie quite in my road, but they came into the prospect

which opened out at a turn of the way, and as I like my companions for the time to see what I saw and to be set thinking as I thought, I have jotted my reflections down. I go forward with my proper subject now.

It may be because my crotchet about perception has overgrown itself in my brain, that I discern as one of the elements wrapt up in the imagery of old mythologies, a horror of blank desolation, and a conviction that the world was meant to be beheld and enjoyed. The beliefs that peopled the forests and the streams with Dryads and Naiads enshrine a persuasion of the same order as that which set me writing this. Of that side of the primitive mind which was turned towards the wonder of existence, photographs, so to say, have been preserved in mythologies and traditional beliefs. When I suppose the world to lie under the scrutiny of Heavenly Beholders, I press into my service one of the oldest and most widely spread of human beliefs; and behind the instinct that prompted it, truth may be found to lie.

I will take the reader with me into a Thessalian valley, in days when the old

Aryan mythology had not yet fixed itself in forms.

The delight of the Greek in existence was sociable as well as intense ; he could not half enjoy the beauty around him if he had to enjoy it by himself. When he piped or sang upon the lone hillside he liked to persuade himself that unseen listeners were by. The mountains were carpeted with flowers which were brighter and sweeter the higher he climbed, and he made no doubt but that on the summit which he could not reach they were brightest and sweetest of all. He could not bear to suppose that they should grow and blossom and perish where neither sight nor smell were known, and so he pictured Sylphs and Nymphs peopling spots where man's foot had never come, and claiming all this beauty as their own.

When the sun rose, and the patch of mist which had slept in the valley crept along the side of the hanging wood, and, passing caressingly from pine top to pine top, finally curled itself into a cloudlet and floated aloft ; then he felt sure that hosts of invisible beings were somewhere about, hastening to greet the

morn : and presently, when all grew brisk with life, when birds were busy and insects humming on the wing, then—lying stretched beside the streamlet which ran laughing down the mountain side—he peopled, in fancy, all the scene with joyous beings who should be for ever much what he was then, only that they could come and stay and go away, unseen by mortal eye.

The same desire to escape the desolation of feeling that the world went blindly on of itself, with no one to know or to care, may have led our country folk to people air and water with Elves and Fairies, Nixies and Pixies. These were company for them rather than supernatural agents. They could not be said to be embodied forces. They exerted little or no power, but they peopled the void, and lent a kind of purpose to the cups of the flowers which provided them with shelter, and to the toadstools which served for their thrones.

But I must call my thoughts back from their little outing in Thessalian vales, and in the combes of our own west country moors, and betake myself to my subject in a more serious way.

I shall notice some general points of uniformity in the Old Testament passages in which Angels appear, and I shall then pass on to the wider and different view taken by our Lord. I shall keep back for another chapter the principal passages which set out the view which I believe our Lord intended us to gather from His words.

Finally, the question will come, What is the bearing of all this matter of Angels on our ways of thinking, on our doings, on our lives? I reply, if Angels are ever about us, looking through us and through nature, registering every pulse of joy and every emotion of good, and bearing it off with delight to the treasure-house of God, this surely must affect the feelings with which we look out on existence, and with which we regard one another and all the creatures of God.

Happily I am not so carried away by my particular view as to find it reflected in all that I read, or to discover that, unknown to themselves, it has swayed all the authorities to whom I refer.

I will allow that I do not find in the Old Testament that Angels are anywhere repre-

sented as having it for their particular function to act as witnesses of what passes on earth. I find no corroboration for my particular views about them. They are always in the Old Testament (taking the Canonical Books¹) messengers and nothing more. They are despatched to perform a definite commission, they perform it and there is an end. They exhibit no sorrow over human lapses from right, no joy when the sinner repents. They are only channels of communication, and we do not even see any necessity for their being *persons* at all.

Speaking of the Old Testament Angels, Archbishop Whately says², "Any person or
 "any thing may be employed by the Lord to
 "intimate his will, to convey his messages to
 "men, or to perform any other service to
 "them. And whoever or whatever is so employed becomes God's Angel or Messenger,
 "whether it be a supernatural flame or any
 "other appearance, or a voice from Heaven, or
 "a man, or any other personal Agent of a different nature from Man—in all cases that

¹ See Appendix, Note C.

² "Scripture Revelations respecting Angels," p. 5. John W. Parker, West Strand, 1851.

“person or thing by which the Lord holds communication with mankind is called his Angel or Messenger....Now in the Old Testament history when an Angel is mentioned as appearing, it is generally some visible object in which there was an immediate manifestation of *the Lord himself*, so that you will frequently find the expressions ‘the Lord’ and ‘the Angel of the Lord’ used indiscriminately to denote the same thing.”

The first mention of Angels, by that name, in the Bible occurs when the Angel appeared unto Hagar in the desert. This instance serves to exemplify some of the characteristic points observable wherever mention is made of Angels in the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Ordinary narrators, when they introduced supernatural messengers, would have had something to say on their nature or functions, on the guise in which they appeared or on the way in which they reached the earth. But there is not a word of preface when we first hear of an Angel of the Lord. Those for whom the account was written were supposed to be familiar with the thought of

angelic visits. That He should send His messengers to the earth, belonged to the idea of God commonly entertained. When the Angel appears to Hagar he comes with no preparation, no display, and causes no consternation. What can be less like the introduction of a Deity in the classical poets, or of an Angel in Milton's poems, than the following account—"And the Angel of the Lord found her by "a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the "fountain in the way to Shur"¹?

Another point to be noted is that we have not a single passage which gives any account of Angels, none to which we could direct an enquirer who wanted information about them. Yet the theme is a tempting one, and it is strange that of the many writers of the Old Testament, supposing they had felt free to write as they pleased, some one should not have given reins to his fancy ; for Chaldaic and Rabbinical writers tell us everything about Angels we could wish to know, their nature, their occupations, their different orders, and the names of the chief among them.

This phenomenon is not strange to me ;

¹ Genesis xvi. 7.

for all God's ways, when He brings spiritual mysteries into contact with men, are conformable to the Law—"Simple assertion of fact, "complete silence as to the mode"—and what is said and what is withheld about Angels very strikingly exemplifies the Law.

There is another point in which we mark a uniformity which is preserved with great care. It is of a negative character but remarkable nevertheless. Nowhere do we find a word in the Bible that can give colour to a belief in the possession by the Angels of independent powers either over nature or over men. They do not alter circumstances, they do not subjugate human wills. If they had any power of this kind they would become personal Genii or restricted Deities, belonging sometimes to a family, or sometimes to a place. The history of heathen worship teaches us that such minor Divinities have often, among the mass of the people, shut out from sight the Gods who, though mightier, were more remote; for men are most at their ease with the Gods that assist in their labours and honour their feasts, and are most likely to be at hand when emergency comes.

Neither in the Old Testament nor the New, have we any instance of an Angel acting independently, or taking any step on his own judgment or of his own will. He is always "given charge" concerning the matter in view and receives definite directions. He has no place outside his errand. It would not be easy for a writer who trusted to his imagination to preserve so delicate a line. He would be inclined to exalt the creations of his fancy: and thus the consideration that in all the numerous books of Holy Writ this distinction is scrupulously observed, while in legendary traditions it is constantly broken through, is another point which I commend to the attention of learned and unlearned alike.

So far I have had to point out cases in which the same rule holds in the New Testament as in the Old, now I come to a divergence equally worthy of note.

Whereas, in the Old Testament, Angels only appear with a definite commission to discharge, and, for all that appears, might have been called into existence for that one occasion alone; and whereas, too, they have no touch of human feeling, nothing of that delicate

sympathy with men and women which Shakespeare, with a true instinct, makes Ariel show; Christ represents the Angels of God as eternal sympathising witnesses of all that passes in Heaven and on earth. They constitute the Host, the Company of Heaven. It will be in their presence—and this seems mentioned as if their participation added solemnity to the decision—that those who have confessed or denied Christ will be by Him confessed or denied. They have too a glory of their own, and when the Son of Man comes to Judgment, it will be “in his own glory and the glory of the Father and of the Holy Angels¹” as well.

I have hinted already at a strange relation which may exist between our implanted faculties of conception and the possibilities of our future lives, and I see before me an example which will put my meaning into shape.

How is it that there is such a strange fascination in all that speaks to us of the Angel World? Why does a word on this matter, read to a home party by the fireside, rivet the attention both of old and young?

¹ Luke ix. 26; see also Ps. xci. 11.

Why has it, so to say, a personal interest for us all? The idea of Angels never seems altogether strange to us. Why is this? Have we brought it with us from a previous state? Is it like the feeling of awakening to recollection, that comes over one who is brought into the house or the garden where he used to play before he could quite recollect? Or does it belong to the future instead of to the past? Is it prognostical? Is it proleptic? Has it been given us to make the lessons needed for our future more attractive and easier to learn? The last suggestion is that which I prefer.

In the last chapter a word dropped by Christ about "the joy of Angels" came upon us just when we wanted it, as Christ's words will often do, and lighted up all our field of view.

There is another word of His, seemingly uttered in order to point the comparison or perfect the illustration, but in which we may find something of the promised "rest unto our souls." The words I mean are found in the answer to the Sadducee, who came to our Lord in the Temple with his carefully ex-

cogitated difficulty of the woman who had had seven husbands. By these words a corner of the veil is lifted up, and the glimpse we get removes some of the mystery from this fascination that seemed so strange.

Well indeed may all that bears on angel life waken a mysterious interest in our souls. Well may it be that a word dropped about it sends off our thoughts into a cloudland; a cloudland not unfamiliar, but where we think we have strayed before or dreamed of straying: and well may we endeavour, in our fancy, to give some kind of form and mode of being to the supernatural visitants who, we rest assured, are about our path and about our bed. Well, indeed, may these hints of Angel existence come close home to us and touch the very quick of our nature, for they give us a glimpse through the clouds of what may be awaiting our own souls.

“And Jesus said unto them, The sons of
 “this ^aworld marry, and are given in marriage: ^aOr, *age*.
 “but they that are accounted worthy to
 “attain to that ^aworld, and the resurrection
 “from the dead, neither marry, nor are given
 “in marriage: for neither can they die any

**“more : for they are equal unto the angels ;
“and are sons of God, being sons of the
“resurrection.”¹”**

These words of our Lord give the key to our strange interest in Angel Life, for they tell us in plain terms that we may some day wear the Likeness of Angels ourselves.

¹ Luke **xx.** 34, 35, 36.

CHAPTER III.

IN writing upon Angel ways of being, we seem to be moving along a border line with scriptural authority on one side and speculative conjecture on the other.

When one is full of a matter oneself everything appears to be full of it too; and while this subject was in my head, as it was in the summer of 1890, the outside world used to become the subject of the inner one, and I would "moralise into a thousand similes" whatever might come in my way. I was paying a visit to Athens in the month of July. Early on one morning, before the heat became intolerable, I went down to the bay beyond Phaleron and walked along the edge of the sea. On the land side what little there was to look at was clear enough, but a

haze, changing in form and place and colour, lay over the sea. Here, I thought to myself, are the two sides of my subject, one is definite, resting on authority and set within bounds; the other offers nothing that the eye can grasp; it will not serve for a picture, but offers a delightful field for vague and dreamy imaginings. The land view was shut in by headlands before and behind, and the low bank of the shore, fringed with spiny, thick-leaved, sea-plants, was just high enough to hide Athens from view. The flat-roofed houses of a Greek village went clambering up the cliff on the side of the headland closing the bay in my front; on the top of this stood an old tower and here and there blocks of ancient masonry peeped through the herbage on the shore. "This," I said to myself, "answers to the authoritative or scriptural side of my work. Here all is accessible, the area is of manageable size, and the line of the old remains points out where one should explore."

When I looked the other way I could not tell, for the mist, where sea ended and the sky began. Once I saw the peak of the mountain in Aegina cushioned on clouds, but

as the haze lifted I lost sight of this, and got instead a glimpse of the yellow slope of the island coast, dashed by a grey sweep of olive grove and speckled with white huts. In like manner, I thought, the region of speculation stretches away into the vast, nothing in it can be outlined distinctly, what one seems to see in it comes and goes, and much depends on the beholder's mood. Thus far in my book I have gone, as it were, along this sea-side path, looking sometimes to landward but mostly out to sea. In this chapter however, except now and then for a change, I shall keep to the definite side of my work. I must take up a serious tone, for I am approaching words in themselves as momentous as any that Christ ever spoke.

It is worth noting that in the Gospel narrative what is of the highest importance is often put in a way singularly adapted to catch attention and be easily carried in the mind. Christ's deepest truths are given in the Parables, and men recollect the Parables who have let much else of the Gospel record fade out of their minds.

Near to the Parables, as regards this

attractiveness, I should place the passages in which questions are asked of our Lord : what the questioner wants to know is often what many of us want to know too, and the putting the matter in the form of a question always brings us to the point of it at once.

Besides this, as soon as a question is asked the bystanders expect a contention, and nothing is dearer than contest to the heart of man. Flagging attention revives at once, all want to see how the difficulty raised will be met, and the looker on lays his interest on this side or on that. In the Gospel these questions turn on points of great importance, and it was most desirable that the accounts of these contentions should be preserved. It would assist towards their preservation, in days when all should go by oral tradition, for these passages to become familiar favourites with catechists and learners ; and they are particularly suited for the use of teachers. For these passages are complete in themselves ; they usually turn upon a single point, and they can be detached from the narrative without losing any of their force. The shortness too of all these con-

tentions forced upon our Lord is very remarkable. His adversaries are never able to draw Him into a prolonged debate. It may be that our Lord did not desire His disciples to aim at victory in argument, but certainly He never gives them the spectacle of a dialectical combat: not only does He dispose of His adversaries in a few words, but His way of dealing with malicious interrogations is most instructive.

Most commonly He removes the matter into a new region of thought—into a higher plane where the air is too rare for His opponents. When a question is maliciously put, our Lord is not careful to meet the question with a rejoinder exact in form and answering the objection point by point. Putting aside the form of the question, He passes at once to the intent, and He addresses the mind of the objector rather than replies to his words. He drops expressions which give a new aspect to the whole matter, and often the malicious query serves as text for a discourse bringing fresh light. Our Lord's reply to the Pharisees about the tribute money is an instance in point.

“And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person of any, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? And they said, Cæsar’s. And he said unto them, Then render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”¹

“We Israelites,” the Pharisees would have said, “were never in bondage to any man, we have no ruler but the Lord, and to acknowledge Cæsar by paying him tribute is to be false to allegiance to God.” They took it for granted, in their objection, without in the least intending to do so, that God and Cæsar were powers not so different in kind but that they might come into comparison; that one might be weighed against the other, and one’s gain might be the other’s loss.

The real object of the question was, of course, either to put our Lord out of favour with the nationalist party or to bring Him into collision with the Roman powers. Our

¹ St Luke xx. 21—25.

Lord, seeing the plot, addresses Himself not primarily to the immediate case, but to the great principle that lay behind it—to the essential diversity between the world of affairs and the Kingdom of God.

All that went to hold human society together, what belonged to organisation and order, social and political,—all this was summed up, in those days, in the name of Cæsar. He was regarded as the terrestrial Providence that kept the mechanism of society going at an equable rate. God had left it to men to shape much of their own history on the face of the earth. In so doing they had found a sphere for their activities; they had sharpened their intelligence, and had developed the side of their nature which was turned toward Cæsar. It was one incident of this history that the Jews at that time had to pay tribute to Cæsar, and our Lord will give no colour to the disturbing of such an engagement by thrusting theocratic considerations into the matter.

But there was something in the universe which was not Cæsar's. There was in man something that was "born of the Spirit,"

something that was God's, and kept in God's own hands, and which did not form part of the goods and chattels handed to Cæsar. Man's condition might depend on Cæsar, but what concerned the very self of the man remained absolutely God's own.

Now we come to the main point of the lesson—a lesson little liable to be forgotten, for it is taught in Christ's special way, that is by a parable of action.

He says, "Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? and they said Cæsar's."

The coin was the emblem of the world of affairs; like that it bore the impress of Cæsar; to Cæsar then it might go. Man wears an image too; it is not that of Cæsar, but of God. This marks him as belonging to God as the coin does to Cæsar. In God's image he was made at first, and in his lineaments some features of his Father may still be traced. Render then the coin to Cæsar, and give the whole man up to God. The Pharisees and Herodians "marvelled" at our Lord's answer "and held their peace."

Soon after come the Sadducees; they

put the question and receive the answer on which this chapter turns. I print the passage here as a whole, although a great part of it was quoted just now.

“And there came to him certain of the Sadducees, they which say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, that if a man’s brother die, having a wife, and he be childless, his brother should take the wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died childless; and the second; and the third took her; and likewise the seven also left no children, and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed, in the place concerning the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. And certain of

the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said. For they durst not any more ask him any question.¹

Our Lord, as far as we have His words, rarely dwells on the subject of the resurrection; we are disappointed sometimes that He does not do so more; but that this doctrine was regarded by the Sadducees as being the head and front of His teaching is clear by their choosing it for their point of assault. They were versed in controversy about this doctrine, and they now opened their attack with the case which had been found to puzzle their opponents the most.

The Sadducees did not themselves believe that there was a future life of any kind at all. Various opinions were entertained at that time, and they take for attack the form in which the doctrine was most commonly found. According to this, the future life would be very much like this present one, only without its vexations and without an end. They were greatly bewildered by the reply, for the fabric they were preparing to demolish was suddenly made to disappear. They found

¹ St Luke xx. 27—40.

that what they were waging war with was not Christ's doctrine of a future life, but only the Jews' way of viewing it. No such situation as they had devised could ever come about, because in Heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage at all. There is no such thing as a male or female soul, in the world of the risen.

For this—the non-existence of wedlock in Heaven—our Lord gives the reason in the clause “for neither can they die any more;” to which the words “and therefore there is no need of births,” may be appended as a corollary.

Both the Sadducees and those with whom they had disputed had always taken it for granted that the married state in Heaven was of the same nature that it is upon earth, and they were not prepared to contemplate a union of any different kind.

It is to marriage as we know it on earth—marriage having for its object the perpetuation of the race—and to this alone that our Lord's expressions apply. Unions of a purely spiritual kind, if such there be, are not comprehended in His words; the question as to their

possibility or probability remains where it would have been if the interview with the Sadducees had not taken place. For all we can tell Spirit may be blended with Spirit, one being may be interfused with another, in a communion so intimate, that a heavenly union may be as much closer than any earthly one of which we know as a chemical combination is closer than a mechanical mixture. About this, as about all that concerns the *mode* of Life Everlasting, written revelation is silent, and silent, not, we may be sure, without cause.

But there are men who own a Revelation that is not written, but whispered. This may come through the intuitions spoken of some pages back, or in presentiments, or in thoughts that force their presence at unlikely times; of such impressions there is none more common and more abiding with those who have suffered bereavement, than that which presages a spiritual union with those they love. By long harbouring of this conception they may even come to regard this ideal union as the reality, of which earthly marriage is only an emblem—the nearest approach perhaps to this reality that those who are clogged with a

natural body can know. If in the whole world of existence, past and future and all, no such spiritual union, by the nature of things, could ever possibly be, "How," they ask, "did the notion ever come into our minds, or why, when it has got there, does it feel itself so fully at home, fitting in with all our ways of thinking and making itself part and parcel of ourselves, so that we cling to this conviction as the dearest support of our lives?"

I spoke just now of our capacity for conceiving certain conditions or states as a sort of ground for our impression that with such conditions we might some day be concerned. I take this to be a case in point. That such a union can be so far conceived, as to occupy the minds of many people is, so far as it goes, in favour of this conception having some significance for us. Possibly, even, there may be an actual counterpart to it in store for us—somewhere, in the vast of after ages—somewhere within the cognisance of God. At any rate those who long for such a reunion need not find their hopes dashed by the words of our Lord. He and those to

whom He was speaking only contemplated that marriage state which we know upon earth.

The verse, "for neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels," tells us, what we had probably taken for granted but for which this statement is our most express authority, viz. that Angels cannot die. Again, by laying this saying of our Lord by the side of St Paul's words, 1 Cor. xv. 44, we arrive at the probability that an Angel has "a spiritual body." Speaking of our Resurrection, St Paul says—"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body." If then risen men have a spiritual body, and Angels are equal unto risen men, Angels must possess a spiritual body too. It is not, indeed, always safe to base conclusions on the comparison of what comes from our Lord and from others, but St Paul is speaking so earnestly on this subject, and in so confident a tone, that we may suppose him to be speaking of what stood revealed to his mind, and we may therefore take what he says in connection

with our Lord's own words, as indicating *a probability*. Beyond this we cannot go.

Now comes the insoluble question, What does "the spiritual body" mean? We can accept the *fact* of our Spirits being thus localised, but we cannot even guess at the *mode*. There is a strange parallel between the above words of St Paul and our Lord's words to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born anew (*or*, from above)." Can it be that "being born of the Spirit" means the quickening of an inborn germ of the spiritual body by the Spirit "breathing where it listeth," John iii. 8, or by the "life-giving Spirit of Christ," 1 Cor. xv. 46? Can it possibly be that this spiritual body should go on growing, along with the natural body, during man's life on earth and afterwards, escaping from it, become equal with the Angels?

A "spiritual body" seems almost a contradiction in terms. But there are one or

two attributes essential to the notion of body, and these we must assign to the "spiritual body" spoken of by St Paul, if we are to conceive it as a body at all. A body, surely, can only be in one place at one time, and if we suppose that each Angel has its own spiritual body we get a little help towards presenting Angel existence to our minds. For one source of the great fascination that a belief in Angel ministry has for men, is that they can suppose the attention of the Angel to be localized, so to say, for the moment, and occupied with them and their concerns.

Moreover this "spiritual body" helps us to conceive the personality of Angels. It is very hard—to me impossible—to conceive of distinct personalities, unless they are clothed in bodies of some sort. If spirits have not separate bodies to dwell in, "How," it is asked, "are they kept distinct?" All this, however, is only part and parcel of the fact that we cannot understand spiritual being at all. St Paul is obliged, by the necessity of using human language, to employ the phrase "a spiritual body," but he only asserts its ex-

istence. He does not attempt to describe the mode. He, like his master, never attempts to communicate the incommunicable. What life everlasting is, no words could convey, for our language is born upon earth and fashioned by earthly things; and in Heaven there may be worlds of sensation beyond the reach of these homely five senses of ours.

I began by saying that the authoritative side of my subject was confined to a definite range—like the land view of which I spoke—and here I am—starting indeed from a text of Scripture—, but carried in speculation about it, out seaward into the thick of the haze.

Some there will be who reading this will say, “Why does our Lord give us only glimpses that make us more eager to gaze our fill?” He speaks here of a future life, and catching the word—hoping, perhaps to hear details and see the glory of paradise unveiled—we draw near and listen, but He only tells what the life is *not*. “If He would but have given us one aspect of that life,” say some, “taken even on the side where it is most like our own, What a source of delight

it would have been!" Then, they think, forgetting the vexations of the present, they might have lived in the future, and the pleasures of anticipation would have made up for all the disappointments and the prolonged weariness of mortal life.

But then this question comes, "Would it be good for us to know more about these matters if we could?" The *whole* truth we could not know without becoming Angels ourselves, and how hard it would be for us then to be detained here upon earth; or suppose that one facet of everlasting life were turned towards us, what countless theories would be framed as to what lay behind it! and what a profligate waste of human energy and human time the spinning of these theories would cause!

We are not intended to lap ourselves in delicious reveries about the future, but to bestir ourselves in doing all the good we can while we are here. In a life of ecstatic contemplation more than half our faculties would waste from disuse and we should fail to learn the lessons for which our earthly existence is the special school.

A fable occurs to me, which is not without some relevancy here :—

Once on a time there was a certain caterpillar who by chance had got an inkling that he was fated to become a gorgeous butterfly. This idea having taken possession of a ganglion of nerve tissue somewhere down his back, which was the nearest approach to a brain of anything he had, he was engrossed in thinking what butterflies were like, and how they enjoyed themselves, and of what colour he was likely to be. Very soon he grew utterly impatient of the lowly duties of larva life—to find food and eat it and grow, to shuffle off his old skin when a new one was ready, and to hide himself under the leaves, out of the sight of insectivorous birds. What a limited range was this! what an insupportable round of dulness! When his thoughts ran upon flying, he felt the direst impatience at being detained in the caterpillar shape, and disgust at being able only to crawl. His one delight was to watch the butterflies chasing one another and spreading out their wings as they settled on the flowers. “It will not be long,” said he, “before I do so too.”

A lovely September morning came, and he was lost in admiration of a splendid peacock butterfly—balancing his wings in rapt enjoyment as he drained the honey from the autumn stone-crops—and, in his ecstasy at the sight, peering out far beyond the edge of the sheltering cabbage leaf, he was spied by a thrush overhead in an apple-tree, picked off and swallowed in a trice.

I come back to the passage before us, although the last two verses of it do not touch on Angel life.

Our Lord would not suffer the great question which lay behind the Sadducees' query to be put out of sight. He uses their assault for an occasion to deliver a lesson of infinite moment. It is contained in a single text and five words of comment, but it is a treasure from which age after age has drawn something that met its particular needs.

There was a higher truth behind the words "I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob," than that God was the Lord whom Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had worshipped in their own patriarchal way. To the Sadducees the patriarchs were men

who had passed into nothingness when their bodies were laid in their burial cave ; all that remained of them was their history in the sacred books. But the patriarchs had known God, and this knowledge carries with it life. "This is life eternal that they should know thee the only true God." John xvii. 3. When, then, the patriarchs drew near to God and God to them, this relation imparted life—they were born again, and their spirits would live for ever in the consciousness of God ; "for all live unto Him." In these last words it is, that the special significance of the passage is brought to light. Life, that is life in the eyes of God, must be as real and actual as any life can be ; and therefore, whatever the *mode* of the existence of the risen patriarchs may be, alive *in a real sense of the word* they still undoubtedly are. If a man owns God, God owns him, and this constitutes the life of the spirit ; what is dead does not know Him and what does not know Him is dead ; what is truly alive does know Him and what does know Him is truly alive.

I find that I have passed one point by.

It is of those only "who are accounted worthy to attain to that world" that the passage speaks; but about the standard of worthiness nothing is said. Surely, however, if we are to find happiness in a spiritual state hereafter, we must learn to place our interest in the spiritual side of our nature now. If all our hearts are set on material comforts, or on our surroundings; upon advancement, or on the success of our party; how much will be left of us in Heaven, when we have no bodies to gratify, no careers to advance, no factions to call forth our zeal? Possibly fitness to enjoy Heaven, that is to do the Angels' work and find delight in it, will go along with, and in some way measure, that "worthiness" spoken of in the text.

I had meant to keep the moral of my book for a later chapter, but the last paragraph has brought a thought into my mind, and I will say a word about it, now that the feeling is fresh.

It has struck me how curiously well the conditions of life in ideal old age are adapted to serve as the threshold for entering the Angel world. Our life on the earth is,

throughout, a schooling for Heaven, and the circumstances of its closing stage are most like to the conditions under which the real work that awaits us will have to be done. Hindrances are cleared away and help is given, now that the bourn is in sight. Self, that, formerly, nearly shut out the Heavens, and filled the centre of our field of vision, has drawn to the edge of this field now, and is disappearing, as a planet passes out of a telescopic view. Herein we gain an approach to the Angels, for the highest perfection with them is to know nothing of self.

The particular function of Angels which I have chosen to dwell upon is that of Heavenly Beholders; endless others of course they may have, but I regard them as finding their delight and their duty in surveying the world, and looking down into the hearts of animals and men, detecting happiness and disengaging good.

Now I remark in the aged, something answering to this, for they, quitting the arena of action, have become spectators,—keenly interested spectators too. With them objects and gratifications of their own have faded

away. Barzillai says, "Can I discern between good and bad? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the sound of singing men or singing women?" He would like his son to enjoy all this, but he himself will stay quietly where he is. Thus an old man is like the Angels in this that he *lives by reflected happiness*. He finds his main happiness in that of others—in seeing animals and people joyous about him; he stops in his walk to appropriate the happiness of insects buzzing on a summer bank of flowers, or of birds twittering long stories one to another, or, most of all, that of children just let loose to play. The youth on the other hand is dominated by the desire to possess; what delights him he wants to make his own. He must gather the fruit, he must catch the butterfly, he must shoot the bird. All this belongs to qualities needed for the battle of life; with the old man the battle should be past. He delights in the beauty of the fruit, but he leaves it for others to eat, and he especially rejoices to see the butterfly and the bird enjoying a life that

is "beautiful and free." All the beauty and the joy in the world, he feels, belong to God, and passers through enjoy it on the way. An old man, having withdrawn from the contest of life, looks on from the outside of affairs, in something like the way in which, when he shall be in Heaven, he may look down still. Party zeal with him has rarified, so that he sees athwart it and discerns things more nearly as they really are.

It will be seen that I am speaking not of old people as they generally or mostly are, but of the ideal old age—the condition, which God, I like to think, has provided for the finish of our schooling on earth. Old men, for the most part, may not be nearer to Angels than young ones are; they may not appreciate their advantages; they may wish they had their old illusions and old temptations back. What old age offers, though meant for our health, may be turned into an occasion of falling. It has, indeed, dangers specially its own. The sense of helplessness may breed distrust, and the old man may give way to avarice, gloating on his wealth

as his only remaining source of influence, the one thing that still is his and that he has to show for his life. There is also a special kind of vanity which affects the aged, sometimes taking the form of a morbid sensitiveness—sometimes of self-complacency—but it is not easy to say whether this arises from mental or physical decline.

The old age, however, now before my eyes is the ideal type; and I have still one salient quality to note common to this stage of life as well as to the Angels, such as they seem to me to be. In this ideal old age, there dawns a faculty, which in Angel work shall find its properest sphere. It is a readiness to discern “a soul of goodness in things evil” and a capacity for delighting in the good discerned. “If there be any virtue and if there be any praise” the old should think on these things.

Of old men's senses some grow dull, but the inner perception of right and the eye for good grow keener with years; when one bodily sense fails, the others often make up for it by becoming more acute, and so it is here: old age certainly seems—taking of course the

ideal type—rather to intensify than dull the delight in goodness and happiness, and the indignation at wrong. Here again it seems to forecast the qualities which shall find their sphere in Angels' work. The old person, such as I take him or her to be, delights in seeing the game of life, or any of the needful contests of men, bravely and nobly played. The aged keep in closest touch with self-devotion and heroic vigour. Of all sensibilities this leaves them last.

You may see an old man, impotent of body—widowed of all but the spirit in his eye—lighting up as brightly as ever at a tale of venture for humanity's sake, and blessing God at the news, for still sending His Spirit upon earth and suffering it to abide in rugged natures, where not every one would look to find it. Nothing will cheer him like an heroic tale. To hear, for instance, how Deal boatmen, swamped in the surf time after time, got their lifeboat off at last, and outliving the dangers reached the wreck on the Goodwin Sands and took off all the crew; or how two lads in a blazing mine ran to

warn their comrades instead of making for the shaft.

Now and then he will catch a prevision of another function of Angels, when they get permission to whisper thoughts to man. He hears of two drowning men clinging to a bit of bulwark broken from the wreck, and of one offering to let go, that the other, who had a wife and family, might have a better chance of life. It was some Angel, his instinct tells him, that whispered to the helmsman of the rescuing boat his straight course to that floating spar; and his dearest dream it is, that he may himself be given charge to do such Angel work as this.

CHAPTER IV.

OF all our Lord's utterances which bear on the Angel world, none comes more often into people's minds than that on which the doctrine of Guardian Angels mainly rests. It is this :

"See that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." St Matth. xviii. 10.

We cannot put this saying by, as though we had got from it all that it had to tell us and had done with it. A riddle that we cannot quite solve, but to which we sometimes think we half see an answer, is apt to cling very persistently to us, and I have asked myself whether that might not be a reason why there is so often something of puzzle in the form in which our Lord puts His weightiest words. He wished them

perhaps to be persistent, and to cleave to people's minds.

We may think it strange, that the above words called out no enquiry or comment at the time. If *we* had been given such a hint, we should have asked endless questions, and, what is more, our attention would have been called off from the reverence due to children, which is our Lord's subject, to the way in which Angels minister to men.

The Apostles, it appears, were not so minded on these matters as we are. Either they were little curious about the Angel world, or, what I think likely, they found nothing to remark in that expression of our Lord, "their Angels," which opens such a field to us. They had never troubled themselves to consider whether Angels were attached to human beings severally, or not; but that Angels did, in some way or other, minister to men was, as they supposed, a fact about which no doubt could possibly exist. If our Lord's crowning illustration, that given in the verse above, had had the same fascination, the same distracting power that it has for us, we may be sure that our Lord would not have

employed it, for it would have divided the interest of His lesson and marred its impressiveness. All our Lord's speeches follow the Laws of Natural Rhetoric; the illustration is never so brilliant as to throw the subject into shade. It is only in St Matthew's Gospel that this important saying is preserved; this agrees with the notion that it did not excite great interest at the time when it was uttered. I print the passage from St Matthew and also the parallels from St Mark and St Luke.

"In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions

of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." St Matth. xviii. 1—10.

"And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, What were ye reasoning in the way? But they held their peace: for they had disputed one with another in the way, who *was* the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he saith unto them, If any man would be first, he should be last of all, and minister of all. And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. John said unto him, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But

Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." St Mark ix. 33—42.

"But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, he took a little child, and set him by his side, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same is great. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against you is for you." St Luke ix. 47—50.

I must ask the reader to go back to the beginnings of chapter xvii. in St Matthew and chapter ix. in St Mark; because a short extract from Scripture, taken by itself, reminds me of the flowers which children bring to one who is collecting plants: their specimens have

nothing but the blossom, while the botanist must have the leaves and the flower-stalk, and likes to have the root as well. The expositor also wants his materials complete.

It was on our Lord's return to Capernaum after His long summer travel in the northern hills, and, as I believe, in the little court of Peter's house, that what we read of in the above passages took place. Our Lord, a few days before, had taken three of the Apostles with Him into "a high mountain apart" and been Transfigured before them. When they were beginning to descend, "He charged them "that they should tell no man what things "they had seen, save when the Son of man "should have risen again from the dead." This choosing of three out of the twelve and the giving to these three a secret to keep—a piece of knowledge which was to be withheld from the rest—could hardly fail of stirring jealousy up. That the Apostles, then, should fall out, during their journey from the foot of the Mount to Capernaum, is in accord with the circumstances affecting their temper at starting; and there is, in all this part of the history, a naturalness and sequence which

I commend to writers on the internal evidence of this part of Holy Writ. We find a situation which pointed to quarrelling, and we find that quarrelling ensued.

When our Lord, going up into the mountain, had taken with Him Peter and James and John, what were likely to have been the feelings of those who were left behind? Once before, it is true, at the raising of Jairus' daughter, our Lord had suffered none to come with Him except these three; but there was a reason for the limitation then, for the chamber was very small, whereas all the Apostles might have gone up the mountain along with their Master. I can quite imagine that the more sensitive among the nine should have taken to heart what they regarded as an exclusion, and have resented the preference given to the three.

When people, turning from higher things, brood over some fancied slight, and centre their thoughts on self and on personal claims, that within them which ought to be uppermost often degenerates and is overborne. So when the Apostles grew jealous, their spiritual force abated; but they were not conscious

that this was going from them, and they ventured on a great spiritual effort without even thinking of invigorating their powers by prayer: they attempted to cure the demoniac child and they failed¹. This failure would make them still more dissatisfied with themselves and with circumstances; and we can imagine that they would not have been in a temper to give a cordial welcome to the three on their return from the Mount. A new cause of offence soon appeared. The nine were not so full of jealousy as to have lost curiosity, and as soon as they had an opportunity they would turn to Peter and the sons of Zebedee, asking, What was it you saw and heard upon the Mount? and when the three answered that they had been forbidden to tell, we can conceive the indignation of the nine. Baffled curiosity is slow to admit excuse. The idea that our Lord's prohibition had been made the most of, in order that the three might keep a certain piece of knowledge to themselves, would be hard to get out of the heads of those who resented being kept in the dark. The possession of a secret by these

¹ St Matth. xvii. 19, 20; St Mark ix. 29; St Luke ix. 37.

three would give them a permanent superiority: our Lord could talk with them about the incidents of that night, and not with the rest. Here then was an inner council placed over the heads of the nine.

The three also would have temptations of their own; they might be lifted up by the special consideration shown them by our Lord; they might take credit to themselves for having deserved it, and they might let it appear that they supposed their Master to belong more to them than to the rest. The nine, on the other hand, would be quick to detect the "taking of too much upon them" in anything the three might do. Knowing the circumstances, then, under which the twelve set out from the neighbourhood of the Mount towards Capernaum, we should be surprised if disagreement had not arisen on the way.

What we judge to have been likely to happen, the history shows did actually come about. The writers, however, never put the two sets of things together; they say nothing of any ill-humour, nor do they note events as being likely to breed it; we have to search

after the two ends of the chain, and link them together for ourselves. Sometimes we find particulars predisposing to evil temper related in one writer, and the outbreak of it in another; sometimes we come upon the cause or the effect by an accidental allusion. But we make out that in this short journey there occurred, in all probability, the quarrel between Peter and another—of course Judas Iscariot has been suggested—which led him to ask, “How many times shall my brother “sin against me and I forgive him¹?” that also, “they had disputed one with another on the way who was the greatest,” and that on this journey John and others forbade a man to cast out devils in the Lord’s name, giving as the reason “because he followed not us.”

Our Lord we read, “passed through “Galilee: and He would not that any man “should know it².” When our Lord preached in the villages the Apostles had to make what arrangements were wanted, and it might have soothed their ruffled spirits, if they had had this occupation now; but on this journey there

¹ St Matth. xviii. 21.

² St Mark ix. 30.

was no preaching, for our Lord's immediate concern was not with the people but with the twelve, to whom He tried to explain what was to come. They were, however, so fully possessed with the idea of the restoration of the kingdom, that they could not be got to accept His words in their plain sense; perhaps the nine thought that our Lord was referring to something which had been revealed upon the Mount.

I like to picture our Lord and His party on their way from the hill country into the plain. To my eyes, the Lord would be a little in front and by Himself, with them but not quite of them, as in all His ways with men. The Apostles, I imagine, in groups of three or four, sometimes stopping a moment to debate, and talking so eagerly and loudly that our Lord could catch their heightened tones. It is a probable suggestion that when they got within a day's march or so of Capernaum, our Lord and Peter pushed on in advance, in order that Peter might get things ready to receive the party at his house. I also accept it as probable that it was during this absence of our Lord that the others fell

in with the man who was casting out devils in our Lord's name. It is not common for any other of the Apostles to take the lead when Peter is by, and John, it is said, would not have put himself forward unless Peter had been away.

Our Lord is not studious to avoid giving occasion to jealousy. Persons in high position in the world are often afraid to face the storm which this stirs up, and they shun doing anything that may bring it about. But with our Lord it is not so : He did not hesitate, we see, to choose whom He would to do what He would. No just expectations indeed were ever wronged by His choice : the case would have been different if that had been so ; for the adverse feeling that comes of a sense of injustice is something different from the jealousy with which I am concerned. Jealousy, strictly speaking, is pain felt, not at your own loss, but at another's gain of some favour which you do not share. This jealousy, inherent as it seems to be in animal nature—showing itself in the brute creation, and in the child as soon as it can observe—is treated by our Lord as essentially evil. He will make

no terms with it. Many of us men do make terms with it for the sake of peace and quiet; and, in consequence, jealous people fancy themselves justified in their jealousy: they see patrons and parents at pains to avoid any show of putting difference between one and another; and they are thereby strengthened in the belief that it is wrong for possessors so "to do what they will with their own," as to bestow their benefits unequally; although no recipient might have any right to expect anything at all.

If our Lord had feared causing jealousy as we do, and been careful to show no more favour to one than the other—even though by so doing He should have to give like employment to the more fit and the less—the jealous, through all time, would have pointed to His avoidance of showing preferences, and have justified their jealousy thereby. But our Lord bates not a hair's-breadth of His Father's prerogative, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy¹." Things are not made even for all alike, in

¹ Exodus xxxiii. 19.

that Kingdom of God of which Christ gives us a glimpse—possibly if they became so, men would themselves become all even as well, and stagnation on a dead level might ensue. Does not the moral of the parable of the Labourers lie in the words: "Is thine eye evil because I am good?" Our Lord does not go out of His way lest perchance He should cause one disciple to be jealous of another. The Apostles are subjected to this kind of temptation as well as to others common to men, and when they grow jealous, they are led—wisely, and not by too frequent admonition or by harsh rebuke—to grow ashamed of their jealousy and of themselves, as we shall see they do here. The treatment was successful. In the Gospels we find the Apostles jealous, they are no longer so in the Acts.

I turn now to the scene in Peter's house at Capernaum when all had arrived. It was in this house that "the sick of the palsy" was lowered through the tiling. We know the plan on which Jewish houses were almost always built¹. The range of buildings,

¹ "Life and Times of the Messiah," Dr Edersheim. Vol. i. 501, 502.

commonly of one story with a flat roof of solid structure encloses a small court, round which runs a corridor with a pent-roof of tiles; on one side of the court is a wide passage opening into the street. This passage, spoken of as "the parts about the door¹," was so crowded with people, when they brought the paralytic to be cured, that it was thought best to carry him on to the flat top², and then, by removing the tiles from part of the roof of the corridor, to lower the couch down the face of the wall into the court where our Lord was.

The return of our Lord and His party probably made some stir in Capernaum. The children, who swarm in the streets of eastern towns, had crowded round the house and filled the broad passage above spoken of which led from the street into the court. The most forward of the urchins we may suppose to have pushed as far as the corridor at the end of the passage, and the Apostles may have had to be stern with them to prevent their pressing into the court itself.

The reader will guess why I want to

¹ St Mark ii. 2.

² By the outside stair. Dr Edersheim.

show how it was that children might be close at hand, although the Apostolic company were within Peter's house. St Mark, whom I shall chiefly follow, narrates what passed with the air of an eye-witness. St Matthew reports the discourse without noting John's avowal which interrupts it, and which leads our Lord on to the subject of "offences"—occasions of stumbling, as the new Version has it—from which He returns to His main subject, in the verse quoted at the head of this chapter.

As soon as all were together in the court, our Lord asks the twelve, "What were ye reasoning in the way? But they held their peace, for they had disputed one with another in the way who was the greatest."

Our Lord had the power—we shall find examples of it if we look for them—of lifting men into a higher spiritual region merely by a word and a look. All, in the Apostles, that was petty and evil, their self-importance, their notions about their respective greatness in the coming kingdom and the animosity which was being hatched in their breasts, all

this, like noisome vapour, hastened away out of sight as soon as our Lord appeared and His Personality made itself felt.

Our Lord's question brings His hearers back to their higher selves, and they can again see that to be permitted to work *at all* in bringing God's Kingdom to pass is a great blessing, in comparison with which all petty distinctions between this kind of work and that disappear out of view. Our Lord brings this about by a question only, not by finding fault. Some may wonder that the Apostles were not oftener set right; but it is Christ's way to lead them to set themselves right. We see, in this instance, how the mere *question* operates. Could any rebuke have met the purpose better? Do we not find that an accusation commonly provokes a defence, and that the temper which is bent on finding excuse is not that which leads a man to amend? Our Lord causes men's hearts to condemn them; and when so condemned they turn in their trouble to Him and find that He is "greater than their hearts and will forgive them:" whereupon a great light comes into their minds. This is what hap-

pened in the scene in the court of Peter's house which I am going to describe.

Our Lord sat down and called the twelve : it was plain He had something serious to say. Although they might feel ashamed for awhile of their differences about precedence, yet these questions would arise again. They had to be taught that the words "great" and "little" do not mean in Heaven what they mean on earth. I like St Luke's version of our Lord's comment on the dispute by the way better than St Mark's. "He that is least among you all the same is great," shows, I think, more insight into the spirit of our Lord's teaching than "If any man would be first he shall be last of all;" which looks as if a penalty were attached to the desiring to be first. I understand the point to be, that it is his readiness to be last which makes a man first.

It is our Lord's way to take some object at hand or some occurrence, as text for His lesson.

In this case our Lord "took a little child and set him in the midst." The child readily came (St Matthew says our Lord "called" it),

and stayed readily where it was put. It felt no fear beside Jesus of Nazareth. It was one of those little ones who believed in Him. On the meaning of "belief" as existing in children I shall presently have a word to say. Our Lord set the child in the middle of the twelve—perhaps in the little court, a few yards square; He Himself and the twelve being under the corridor. But it was a trying thing for a child to stand there by itself, so our Lord almost immediately took it and folded it in His arms. I believe that it remained by Him during all the lesson He delivered; for though John's interruption, not noticed by St Matthew, leads our Lord away to speak of "offences" yet He recurs afterwards to "these little ones," and the care there is for them in Heaven. It is the child that supplies the leading thought that runs through the discourse.

The child mind, our Lord begins by saying, is a requisite for entering the Kingdom of Heaven. There was much that the Apostles might learn from them. A child does not dispute with others who is greatest; it is free from self-importance, it is filled with delight at being thought able to render service, even

of the slightest kind. What is more, a child accepts what it is told without putting into it anything of its own; whereas what some of the disciples really wanted, was not Christ's Kingdom, but Christ's sanction and adoption of a kingdom of their own devising. When they saw there was no hope of getting this, some "turned away and walked no more with Him¹."

This need of resembling children, if we are to enter God's Kingdom, has set me thinking whether what we call the illusions of childhood may not, in some cases, belong to those intuitions I spoke of two chapters ago.

"Childhood," says Ruskin², "often holds a truth with its feeble fingers, which the grasp of manhood cannot retain, which it is the pride of utmost age to recover."

The child drinks in the glory and the rapture of the novel world on which he gazes; he is so lost in looking outward, that he never thinks about himself at all. The child looks

¹ John vi. 66. So, in some degree, it is with us now; people search the Gospel looking to find their own views in it.

² *Modern Painters*. Preface to Second Edition, p. xxviii.

straight upon nature as she is ; while a man sees her reflected in a mirror, and his own figure can hardly help coming into the foreground.

Our Lord speaks of the children as "little ones which believe on me." There is something in the word "believe" that may set us thinking here. It cannot mean accepting any creed ; for a child could have no opinions *about* Christ, as to His nature, or as to whence He came, or as to whether He was the Messiah or not ; yet Christ owns children as believing *on* Him all the same. What the children felt for Christ was an assured personal trust. They had made out, even though the Apostles might be inclined to drive them away, that with *Him* they were safe. A child by long and wistful looking finds out with whom it can establish an understanding, and, when it has so done, it clings with steadfast loyalty to its friend. There was in our Lord something which won over children's hearts ; and no Scribe or Pharisee, no pastor or master, would find it easy to persuade the child who had been folded in our Lord's arms, that Jesus of

Nazareth was other than a good and holy man. Belief, in this case, then, means only a loving trust; and many who have been worried about points of doctrine may find in this some rest to their souls. Christ accepts from a child the only belief a child can have. From a man, it is true, He will want a man's belief; but it will be a comfort to those, who, in regard to metaphysical subtleties, "occupy the room of the unlearned" along with children, to feel that they may enter the Kingdom of God "as a little child," putting aside all that is too hard for them, and resting their hopes of acceptance on their confidence, their loyalty and their love.

"Whoso," our Lord goes on to say, "shall receive one such little child in my name," (i.e. because he knows that it is dear to me), "receiveth me." Hereupon it strikes John that he himself had not "received" one person who had come, expecting a warm welcome as a successful worker in the same cause. The confidence between master and disciple evidenced by this free avowal is to be marked: if the disciples had been set right whenever they were wrong, or had frequently met with re-

proach, such confidence might not have grown up. It was much helped on by their being sure that their Master would understand them: what often keeps young people from opening their hearts to their elders is that they are afraid of not being understood. But though our Lord is very gentle in His treatment of the particular case—for the answer to John is scarcely a rebuke—yet He speaks strongly of the distemper of which a symptom had appeared; of the evil humour which vents itself in rebuffs. He begins to speak of “offences,” “skandala” in the Greek¹. The transition in St Matthew appears abrupt from his not giving us the incidents, as St Mark does. When we learn that it was John’s repulse of the man who had cast out devils, which set our Lord on this theme, a light is thrown on the particular meaning of the word “skandala,” which I think was in our Lord’s mind—that, namely, of the checking others on their way to good, the throwing back on itself of the enthusiasm or warm affection which was begin-

¹ I have used the Greek word here and elsewhere because “offences” gives a wrong idea, and “occasions of stumbling” is cumbersome.

ning to flow, and the choking up of the heart-springs thereby. The man who had been casting out devils and was turned back because he did not follow with the Apostles might have asked, "Would the Scribes and Pharisees have treated me worse?" The revulsion might deaden his spiritual life. Imagine a child coming home after a long absence, ready to throw himself into a parent's arms, hungering for the affection on which his thoughts have dwelt when away, and being sent back, out of love for orderliness, to wipe his shoes. Might not his moral system suffer from the shock? This illustration will show how I take the word "skandala" here.

There could scarcely have been need to warn the Apostles against leading a child into what they knew to be harm; they would not have tempted it to go wrong, but they may have discouraged it from going right. It may never have struck them how much mischief hardness and repression might do; and I think I gather from our Lord's dwelling on the subject of children—for it is not only as an illustration that He calls the child to Him

—and also from His telling the disciples not to *despise* the little ones, for whom His Father greatly cared, that He had noted something contemptuous and harsh in the manner in which the twelve had dealt with the children, who probably had been troublesome enough, in the villages on the way. They may have shown the same temper in keeping the street urchins from pressing into the court. The recurrence to “these little ones,” Matth. xviii. 10, makes me think that our Lord still had before Him the crowd of children, who may have stood in the passage between the court and the street, wondering probably what would happen to their companion whom our Lord had folded in His arms.

My approach has been more slow than I intended, but I come at last to the passage about which I was meaning to write. Following St Matthew, we find that our Lord comes back from the matter of “offences” to demand reverence for the young lives who are so dear to God. It would be no news to an Israelite to be told that Angels watch over children; but it would waken a perfectly new respect for these little ones to hear that their

Angels were in the closest communion with God.

For ourselves, as I said at the outset, no sooner do we catch the words "their Angels," than, losing sight of the theme of the lesson, we say to ourselves, "So children have Angels of their own! When they cease to be children, what do their Angels do?" Here a whole world of speculation opens to our view; but of the diverse interpretations of the words I can only touch on two, viz. the guardian Angel doctrine, and another which I favour most myself.

The first of these supposes that each soul born into the world is given in charge to some individual Angel, who shall watch over it and, in some way or other, render it aid in the critical junctures of its life.

This, in three particulars, goes beyond what the passage warrants. Our Lord is speaking only of children, and we are not justified by what He says in asserting that Angels are attached to persons of full age. Then, the doctrine usually takes it for granted that an Angel can, of his own authority, so affect circumstances or the wills of men, as to bend

matters, small matters at least, in the way that the safety of his ward requires. There is not a word in the Canonical Scriptures that gives sanction to this. Again, in this doctrine, as it is commonly known, each child is supposed to be assigned to some particular Angel; whereas the language of the passage is satisfied if a certain company of Angels collectively are given charge over children in general. In this idea of *collective* as opposed to *particular* guardianship I find the best solution of the problem.

A chosen company of Angels might, according to my view, turn their attention to children; finding their delight in the unconscious happiness of children, as some might in that of animals, and others, again, in that of certain sections of men and women: marking every movement of thought which made for good, and registering it, with gladness, in memories which cannot be overburdened and which cannot fail. This would fall into the *witness work* which I take to be the Angels' own domain; but an individual Angel might be given charge over one or more little ones on any occasion or for any time. He might

be allowed to exercise certain entrusted powers, and to whisper what God approved; he would then become a Divine instrument, and to believe in such a being would not set us further off from God: He would act by means of the Angel, as He acts through the influences that commonly affect us,—such as the advice of friends, the prompting of circumstances, the books that come in our way. But a guardian Angel, who should exercise independent power, seems to me an inferior deity interposed between God and myself; and I find no place for Him in my soul, inasmuch as I have Christ's word that He will Himself be "with us alway, even unto the end of the world."

There is another difficulty in the theory of particular guardian Angels attached to individuals. My impression is that Angels cannot be all alike: nowhere in God's world do we find all the members of a species identically similar, exactly as a machine would turn them out. And what an insurmountable inequality would be introduced between two individuals if one had a more vigorous and resourceful guardian than the other.

Plutarch has told us, and Shakespeare has made the tale familiar, that the Egyptian soothsayer told Mark Antony that his fortune was obscured by that of Augustus. "For," said he, "the good angel and spirit that "keepeth thee is afraid; and being courageous "and high when he is alone, becometh fearful "and timorous when he cometh near unto the "other." (Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, North's translation.) We can see that it would be bad for us to doubt the efficiency of our guardian Angel, and to learn to lay upon him, as we should be apt to do, the misfortunes and ill successes of our lives. Now the moral effect of a doctrine helps us to judge of its probable correctness; and as the effect of this doctrine would be bad, I am averse to believing it to be true.

We feel a want of Angels as witnesses, and to believe them present does us good. I shall give a whole chapter to this matter, and need not linger on it now—only I will say that witnessing Angels I do want, and individual guardian Angels with independent powers I do not¹.

¹ I am not without authority for the view I have taken. A

The doctrine of Guardian Angels is so dear to many and has such high authority at its back, that to impugn it is no light matter; but, frequently as the Apostles speak of Angels, I do not find in their teaching any recognition of that doctrine; and on reviewing the words of our Lord—both those of which I have spoken and those which I have passed by—it strikes me that the word “Angels,” being in the plural, favours the idea¹ that their action, unless when on special service, may be corporate and collective rather than individual.

There is something too in that passage from which these notions of mine took their life which seems to point the same way. The passage is this.

friend has pointed out to me a passage in the writings of Cardinal J. di Vio Cajetan, who lived from A.D. 1470 to 1534. The passage is taken from a Commentary on St Matthew: the author is speaking of Chapter xviii. verse 10:

“And mark well that He does not say their *several* Angels, but He says ‘their Angels,’ for from this text it does not hold good that individual men or even individual little ones believing in Christ (for to keep to the letter it is of these that the text speaks) should each have his Angel, but only that they should have *Angels*, blessed Angels. For which text to be true in effect, it is not needful that there should be a separate Angel to each child, but it is enough that to them, that is to the multitude of the children, are assigned Angels many in number.”

¹ See John i. 51; Matth. xiii. 41; Luke xii. 8, 9; Matth. xxv. 31.

“Even so I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” St Luke xv. 10.

The joy is not that of the sinner's guardian Angel, but of the company of the Angels of God. No one Angel, as far as we hear, takes the lead in rejoicing: the gladness caused by the repentance of the sinner is equably diffused; he is an object of interest to all.

For myself, I find something cheering in the idea of a body of spectators in heaven, looking on at human action with an interest all the keener because it is felt by many in concert—each perhaps noting and communicating particulars observed by himself—and because the emotions caused by the prospect, the joy and the sorrow and the tenderness, are multiplied by being transmitted from one to the other and being reflected back.

What I have to say from Gospel authority on this subject comes here to an end. I began by saying that I was not going to prove anything at all. What I have been trying to do, was so to put the matter as to show that Christians might take my view, if they pleased.

These last three words are important, for

some action of our own will there must be when we accept an article of belief, or else it is not moral belief at all. For belief to have any vital effect on a free spiritual being, he must be able to disbelieve if he likes. In this matter—as in Christ's revelation generally—there is ample room given for the exercise of this right of option. If you, my readers, wish to believe in the constant oversight of Angels, you will find, I trust, in what I have given, grounds to enable you so to do. You will care all the more for this belief about Angels, if you adopt it, from its not pretending to be rigorously proved: it will be all the more your own. When scientific truths were in a debatable, half metaphysical stage, men loved their particular convictions and battled for them with an eagerness that was intense; but after these truths became accepted mathematical verities, they inspired only a temperate regard.

The quotation with which the chapter began contains one clause on which I have hardly touched, but it is on this that the emphasis is thrown. The Angels of the chil-

dren "do always," says our Lord, "behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." I will try and explain what I take these words to mean.

Hitherto I have chiefly regarded Angels in their capacity of witnesses ; I come now upon their ministering functions. For the exercise of these, as I have said more than once, I conceive that Angels require to receive a special charge ; and the only kind of intervention to which I commit myself—though by no means denying that it may take effect in hundreds of other ways—is that of putting thoughts into the minds of men. I regard this passage as declaring that the children's Angels are in the closest relation with God—so that when any notion enters their minds they are instantaneously aware whether God approves it or not ; and if He does, they feel themselves at once equipped with His authority, and can put their desires into action at once. They witness some emergency, for instance, and, at once, they catch from the Father's face their warrant for sending the saving thought into the mind of the child or those who are about it.

There may be whispers too of the Angels which find their way to the hearts of little ones, in dreams, or in impressions with which they awake—or in strange thoughts whose coming is unaccountable. In this way it is possible that the Godlight, “the light that lighteth every man,” may make its way into their souls.

After a little while, no doubt,

“Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,”

but there are more boys than we should think of, who have, floating in their minds, a notion that “heaven was about them once,” and is not yet so far off but that they are objects of care to beings whom they cannot see. This feeling comes on many a lad now and then. It seems as though he were called by name and made answer “Here am I.” About these impressions he will say nothing, not even to the companion of his dearest exploits. He supposes that it is with other people the same as it is with him, but, whether it be so or not, these are secrets between God and himself and he will keep God’s counsel.

Autobiographies, and journals not meant

for the common eye, have brought to light many cases such as I speak of; and what we find in the lives of notable men may lead us to suspect the existence of something similar among those the secrets of whose lives are undivulged.

There are many persons, to whom there has occurred some vivid impression or opportune thought, some deliverance, or happy chance which has influenced their lives; not only by its immediate effects, but by giving them the sense that divine influences are about them, and that they can not, therefore, be wholly negligible beings, however many there may be whom they may suppose to be better worth God's consideration than themselves¹.

The Old Testament has a case in point. It was David's deliverance from the lion and the bear, which set him thinking, that God would deliver him from the Philistine as well. Have not some of us met with our own bears and lions, and has it not occurred to us, that God would not deliver us one day and abandon us the next?

¹ See Notes to the Chapter at the end of the book.

These, as I say, are not things men talk about—they are kept in a consecrated chamber of the mind. They may help to keep our higher self alive, and to preserve that self's identity. These influences I represent as coming through Angels—although the Angels I take to be only agencies through which God Himself operates—and such influences may play no small part in bringing about the great purpose of our abode on earth, the fitting ourselves to be worthy of the Resurrection to Eternal Life. What if some should, through such agency, exerted in their childhood, be rendered worthy to consort with those very Angels, who “do always behold the Father's face”?

CHAPTER V.

I HAVE at last come to the practical side of these speculations of mine ; I have, indeed, invited the reader, now and then, as we came on our way, to glance at their bearing on human conduct and on the problems of life ; but these same bearings, these positive results, are now the particular things which we have come on purpose to see.

I shall be kept to the salient points of the matter by some such questions as these : “ Do any results of these views of yours give us a steadier footing where the ground seems to be giving way ? ” “ We are bewildered by hearing, ‘ What is the good of it ? ’ and ‘ What can it matter ? ’ distractingly buzzing in our ears.” “ Can you find us an answer or lessen the din ? Even if the Angels of God should look all creatures through and through, and delight, as you say, in the good they find,

how will this make us happier or better or more fit to become like unto Angels ourselves?"

If I were to set about answering these queries in an orderly way; beginning, for example, by showing how, if these views came into vogue, our systems of Christian ethics might have to be partially recast; then my book would put on a more severe and scholastic air than the reader bargained for when he took it up.

What I have to say to these enquiries will appear in this chapter and the next; but instead of answering the questions one by one, I must be let to go on in my own way, somewhat discursively as heretofore.

The reader knows, how the sight of the lizard on the wall at Siena set me thinking that the happiness which the sight of his state of enjoyment set up in me—the happiness that he seemed to exhale—could not be lost; but that, even if no human being had caught sight of him, as he lay curled up, blinking and basking in the sun, still, that intelligent beings, of some kind, there must have been, who should understand his happi-

ness and be themselves the happier for it, just as I had been myself. My thoughts did not rise to Angels all at once ; they began by running in a somewhat philosophical vein, and enquiring, "Does the beauty of this lizard really exist if nobody sees it?" "Does his happiness exist, if neither he nor anyone else has any idea how happy he is?" By "no one" and "nobody," I meant what in bygone days we had called "a perceptive intelligence ;" this was an abstraction, and a very cold and colourless abstraction too.

So far I was only amusing myself; and if I had remained where I began, my metaphysical playthings would have gone back into their box, and never been heard of in print. It was a later glimpse that I got, a glimpse of the practical good that might come of the idea that had struck me, that made me go on. How I got sight of the Angels the reader has partly seen; but how the moral efficacy that dwelt in the thought came into my mind along with the thought itself, I can best explain by relating the course of my mental explorations on that night at Siena, when I thought over the day's experi-

ences—the lizard and the urchin—and, setting out to find “perceptive intelligences,” brought back with me, “Angels of God.”

Let me here forestall an interruption: “How on earth,” those will say who know me, “did such a notion or phrase as perceptive intelligences ever get into your head?” I have reserved the right of being discursive, and, discursive enough I must be, if I am to say how I came by the thought or the phrase, for the story will carry me back five and forty years.

Still, as the last chapter was one of unrelieved comment, and as there is grave matter yet before me, I am willing enough to pause; more especially as the reminiscences which attend are extremely pleasant ones to me.

As was the way with many in my college days, I dipped into metaphysics just after my degree; and I recollect debating with myself and with others the well-worn question, whether a thing could properly be said *to be* if no intelligent being *perceived it to exist*? To meet this difficulty, and, without trenching on Theology, to put my logical system into a condition of dialectical defence, I had

pleased myself with supposing that a host of perceptive intelligences might be hovering near, taking cognisance of all that existed and noting everything that passed.

At that time we had not begun to take our lives and our philosophies in that terribly earnest way which a few years later became quite imperative ; and it may have been that one of our party who—well—rather liked, when such matters were pending, to take a place hard-by the seat of the scornful, suggested that “perceptive intelligences” cost nothing, and if they would make me in the least more certain of my own existence, “Why, I had better order plenty of them in.”

Soon came the work of life, and idealistic philosophies, perceptive intelligences and all, were huddled together and quickly put out of the way. Everyone has somewhere a cupboard in which lie the remains of the abandoned hobbies of his youth ; cheap apparatus for “Recreations in Science,” models half constructed, collections just begun, as well as appliances for sports that have had their day. That cupboard may stand unopened for years, but the owner likes to

know the things are there; and one day something awakens his tenderness for the past, and he takes them out and turns them over, and thereby renews acquaintance with his bygone self; and this is not a bad thing for him to do.

These old vagaries of mine were like the apparatus and the rest of the things mentioned above: I liked to know they were there, and my thoughts rested on them now and then. So, when I saw the lizard, and delighted in contemplating his perfect well-being, and felt that surely there must be some provision for his happiness being observed, and passed on, I bethought me of these "perceptive intelligences" of old times, and I had them out to see whether they would do. I was rather disappointed to find how little suitable they were. They were confined to *perception*, they only saw what appeared—phenomena. They had nothing to do with feelings of any kind. They could not get into the hearts of creatures. So I feared they would not understand "unconscious happiness," and I was sure that they would not enter at all into my lizard's views of life.

I soon saw that I had gone leagues and leagues away from the state of mind in which I had played at mental philosophy forty years before : and when, in the course of my review of the thoughts and incidents of the day just passed, I had got to the Piazza, and the urchin who loved the baby beneath which he staggered along ; then it became more clear than ever that these old creations of mine were not, at all, what I wanted. They had been invented to meet purely intellectual wants, but my present needs touched on feelings, moral persuasions, and the like. So I set my old fancies to rest again, giving them a kindly farewell look, as we do to relics of pursuits outgrown when closing on them the cupboard door : they were redolent with kindly memories ; with recollections of old evenings of good talk, when we young people played the philosopher, and were saved from becoming prigs by knowing, in our hearts, that we were only playing all the time.

But now my philosophy was not quite play. It grew more and more serious all that day and night ; and I discoursed with myself, as to what the disposition and the capaci-

ties of these spiritual beholders must be, in order that the good and happiness in the world, which seemed to go undiscovered, might be gathered up and restored to whence it came ; perhaps to be redistributed again. First I saw that these beholders must have insight, then that they must have sympathy, then that they must find delight in their work ; and so it finally broke upon me that these beings must be full of "Love, the capacity Divine." A light shone down upon me, as soon as I got to this.

There came into my mind that text which has served my book as the charter of its being ; and forthwith these nascent abstractions of mine, for which I had been looking out a proper assortment of qualities, leaped into personality and life, as though an electric circuit had been completed, and a chemical union between adjacent atoms had been effected thereby. I said to myself, These are the beings I want—they live in the pages of Scripture ; they lived in my thoughts as a child ; they are the Angels of God, that I used to be told were about my bed.

These phantasms came more and more into shape, as I went thinking on, and at last they seemed to stand before me and say, "Yes, we are they whom you read of in the text that has caught your eye; we exult over a repentant sinner as men do over treasure-trove, but those who need no repentance bring us a steady and abiding joy. We scan the universe to gather good, as bees with you carry the honey home; and where, as with your lizard, no moral good can be, we find delight in what most nearly takes its place, the sense of well-being, which comes of the perfect performance by the creature of what it was intended to do. The happiness of all things in the world we make our own; this is the bright side of our being: there is another, a sad one, for there must be shadow or there cannot be light; but on this there would be much to say, which now you cannot hear; besides, the world wants cheering at this present time. We, Angels of God, rejoice in your good and your joy, and grieve over your faults and your pains; not always loving those least who, like that repentant sinner, have caused us much grief before.

Some grief you always cause, but the interest of having you to love outweighs the woe, and we spy a gleam beyond the cloud."

"The joy or the grief you cause us does not pass away. Something that is lasting, therefore, you, short as your lives may be, are able to bring about. The joy or the grief you bring to us is written on tablets that cannot be defaced. Men forget and men die; and you may suppose, though wrongly, that the good or the ill that you have done to others passes away with their memories or their lives. We are immortal and our memories do not fade. We watch you ever, and we love you all; and it would bind you each to the rest in closer ties than any you know of, if you could only feel what heavenly affection wraps you round, how dear you all are to us and to the Lord. Never suppose yourselves alone: we are always by; we know much that passes through your mind; what you really would do if you could, and what you think you would do if you could, and we know how different these two things often are. We know, too, what you on earth can never know, how much of what seems to be good and evil in each of

you, comes of circumstance, comes of temperament, comes of blind motion of nerve or of brain, and how much of it comes of what is purely and properly You."

The Angels appeared to have spoken and to have passed away. Soon I became aware that out of the seed they had scattered broadcast, a whole crop of ideas and impressions was springing up. Some of these, jostling others out, have established themselves in my mind.

Foremost of all, as I said at the outset (pp. 14—15), came the delightful sense of having got hold of something real, of a good in which I could rest; which was what it claimed to be of and by itself, and not because it contributed to something else after which I should have to grope. This good is "Joy in Heaven," "Joy in the presence of the Angels of God," the making Angels glad; and—what was the head of the matter—this joy might be greater or less owing to *me*, owing to my helping or not helping to make peace and spread love and, generally, to my doing or not doing what I ought, and to my becoming or not becoming what I should.

We have an instance here of the trite old truth, that there is nothing so much a man's own as what comes of his own doings, and nothing so dear to him as what he makes his own in this way. So we shall care more for the joy of the Angels when we understand that we contribute to it ourselves.

When the son helps to support his parents, are they not sometimes dearer to him than when they support both him and themselves? So it is even in spiritual things; you love God with more real feeling as soon as you feel that there is something that you can do for Him yourself. Probably you do not venture to think that you can make *God* happier—though some do think it and are none the worse for it—but to the Angels you can venture to think that you may bring joy; and you may delight in the discovery that you can best do this by making all creatures glad about you, men and women and every living thing—supposing always that this gladness is pure and sound and not borrowed of the future at high rates. You will perhaps be surprised that your duties to God and to your neighbour should run on roads so nearly

parallel. If men could only see that they could make Angels in Heaven happier, many, I am sure, who now pass for being idle or indifferent, would spring at once to their feet; "We were only waiting," they would say, "to find something that we could care for, and help to bring about. See whether we will be idlers now?"

Part of that vivifying power which I found in the Angel's words came of this—they restored to me that personal part of mine in the universe, that claim to go for something as an individual soul, which certain social theories acting in one way and some scientific discoveries in another have somewhat tended to disparage. If Angels cared about me and were happier or sadder on my account, looking on me as a being who might some day be one of themselves, then clearly I did not count for nothing; I was neither merged in a mass, nor was I a mere waif or stray tossed up on the shore of the world. I had come into it with a business to do, which was different from anybody else's and must be done by me.

This notion of intermediate intelligences

seemed to make the entire spiritual world one. Naturalists have made out a continuous chain of species in the organic world: what if there should be a world of Angels, of different orders, bridging over the chasm between man and God? The widening of a generalization has a strange fascination: and when this idea presented itself to me, I felt like one who has been reared in a group of islands, among fogs and narrow seas, and who one day escapes into the wide ocean with nothing to limit his view. The boundless spiritual world was one community, and of this I was a member myself. My world became infinitely more vast; I had all the company of Heaven to care for, as well as all the beings on earth. Who of us men and women, and even indeed of the animals, could be offended and the company of Angels not be offended? The world began to look differently from what it had done before.

This thought of Angels helped me too against a certain definite difficulty. The sense of the infinity of the physical universe which grows upon people with the discoveries of science, is, by some persons, found to be overwhelm-

ing ; it crushes out of them much of their spirit and more of their Faith. They are disheartened and lost in immensity ; they contemplate all space dotted with inhabited worlds and their own part in God seems to dwindle at each discovery. "Sure the Almighty," said a Scotch artisan after a lecture on Astronomy, "wi' a' these warlds to see after, winna fash himself wi' the likes o' me." For my own part, I had never felt this difficulty greatly, for I had always set one infinity against another ; saying that if the physical universe was infinite, God was infinite too ; and that although my share in His providence might be infinitesimal, still it was an infinitesimal part of infinity, and that, as mathematicians know, may be of any magnitude, you cannot say what.

Now upon this trouble, arising from the discovery of myriads of worlds, my Angel theory can be brought effectively to bear. For if there are countless worlds, there may be countless Angels as well ; God's instruments may be multiplied indefinitely as well as the objects of His care, so that there need be no fear of Providence having no attention

to spare "for the likes of us." An infinite Host of finite beings such as I have taken Angels to be, everywhere busy, is easier to conceive than a single infinite being cognisant of all doings in all worlds.

Now I turn to another point. People have disparaged the world on account of its transitoriness, because "the fashion of it passeth away." Everything, it is said, seems born to be forgotten. Now in this view of mine about Angels, there is something that gives permanency to what is accounted to be fleeting. What Angels have perceived rests in their memories and does not pass away; it may bring joy or it may bring grief, when it is recalled, just as our own early recollections do. I suppose that the impressions which Angels receive, as they survey the living world, become part of their being, and in consequence are as eternal as themselves. Events may have passed where no one saw them, when no participator lived to tell the tale, but the deeds that there were wrought—were they noble or were they base—cannot be as though they had never come to pass; the spiritual world is so much richer or poorer

in virtue of them ; Angels have come to the knowledge of these events, or deeds, or mental changes, and in their memories they remain for ever.

It used to be the way, with essayists, to twit mankind with the coral insect. *He* left behind him, so it was said, material evidence of his having lived, evidence which would endure as long as our configuration of land and ocean lasted on the globe. But when this globe, coral reefs and all, is calcined to powder, or crusted over with ice, layer upon layer, even then the good or the evil wrought by us—aye by the least considerable among us—will remain existent, surviving in these abiding memories of the Angels of God.

Such was the way in which my thoughts ran as the notion of Angel presence took a more and more definite form. Then I turned Christ's words about the joy of Angels over and over in my mind, and every time I looked into these sayings of His I saw something that had escaped me before.

The parable of the lost piece of silver, with our Lord's application of it to the joy of the Angels, has already yielded much, but it

has something yet to reveal. We learn from it that Angels cannot, of their own inherent perception, see into the future nor penetrate all secrets in the hearts of men. This parable, and that of the lost sheep which goes with it, both turn on the joy of recovering after anxious search. There could have been no anxiety if it had been foreseen all along that what was lost would be found. The joy came greatly of relief and *unexpectedness*; and if this had not been also the case with the joy of the Angels over the penitent, if his conversion had not been unlooked for, the parable would not apply. Furthermore this passage shows that Angels do not, unless specially empowered, know what passes in the minds of men. The repentance of the sinner is not likely to have taken place all at once. If his heart had lain open to the Angels, they would have marked movements towards good, increasing probably in frequency and strength, and they could not have been surprised at his penitence as they are represented to have been.

Not only do we see that the Angels, in this glimpse that is given us by our Lord,

are shown to be capable of surprise, but they are given another characteristic as well, and one that is singularly human. They rejoice more over the penitent, for whose restoration they did not look, than over the ninety and nine just men who needed no repentance. Now this is just what we do ourselves; we exult over the windfall infinitely more than over what comes in regular course; and when we learn that this is so with Angels as well, we hail it as though we had caught the sound of our native speech in a strange land; and we can, all the better for this word of Christ's, take Angels into our sympathy, and make them at home in our hearts.

We now see, what we might not have perceived, why it is that our Lord in applying the parable speaks of "Joy among the Angels" and not of "Joy with God." The latter phrase would have strengthened His statement, but it would have involved that anthropomorphism which our Lord avoids. For it would have implied, that God was capable of being made sorry and glad; and, what is far more, if God's name had been introduced, it would have followed that things

might come unexpectedly *even upon God himself*,—which would run counter to all our beliefs about Him.

Something has occurred to me as a possible reason why our Lord shows us the Angels subject to certain human qualities and limitations, while He so carefully abstains from representing God as subject to the feelings of a man. In the Old Testament, God, we know, is spoken of as jealous and wroth and repenting of what He has done; whereas Christ is careful not to speak of God as being even susceptible of an increase of joy. He attributes to Him only love and what comes of love. But, while thus careful not to sanction the old practice by His example, He does not condemn it. He never says, you shall not speak of God as though He could be angry or sorry or glad. People had learned so to speak of Him in old days, and it is likely that if they had not so represented Him to themselves in those times they could have formed no notions of a Deity at all.

“Him bery good man, him make God bery glad,” said a Cairo donkey boy, of an English surgeon who cured ophthalmia and

took no pay. This may be anthropomorphism, but we could do with more of it.

The more we refine about the essentials of God's being, and the more we dwell on His infinity, the further off we put Him from our daily life. That this should be so may be an actual necessity of the ways in which human thoughts progress,—but for some it is a loss; it puts them more out of touch with the spiritual world.

Let us regard the matter in this way. Supposing it should follow in the natural course of mental growth that men's views of God become more abstract; so that men,—first introducing infinity into one or two attributes, and then finding they must have it in all,—shrink from supposing Him present and interested in the little affairs of their lives, and hesitate to say they could make Him sorry or glad. This, though possibly inevitable, might still carry some ill with it along with the good. Is it not conceivable that against this ill, which He foresaw might fall upon a distant age, Christ should have laid up in His word a remedy which would be little thought of until the need became

urgent? May not the belief that Angels are ever about us, feeling for us and feeling with us, effect for ourselves that particular kind of good which former generations derived from holding views about God which we call anthropomorphic? It may help to make us feel that "one touch" of Spiritual order "makes the whole world kin."

Our Lord keeps Angels before our view in the Gospel: we cannot say why, but that He does this of set purpose I do not doubt; and my guess at the purpose is, that He desires us to suppose that spiritual beings are about us and care for us, and that He has with this intent shown us the Angels within fairly easy reach of our minds.

There may be orders of Angels gifted in different ways. Some I can conceive entering into the natures of animals, and appreciating that sense of function rightly performed, which I have called the unconscious happiness of dumb things.

There may be Angels too, as I have lately said, to whom little children are a special charge, and with such special charge special powers well may go. They must know the

workings of the little hearts or they could not send the right whisper or know how the whisper worked. As the child grows into the youth, the Angels may gradually lose their view of what goes on in his mind. It is not, I think, consistent with what we are told, to suppose that Angels can read the hearts of *men and women*, and know all they think and imagine, in a preternatural way. To suppose that the whole sanctuary of our hearts is supernaturally laid bare to beings who are finite and therefore imperfect, would besides being unscriptural, seem to me to trench on the privacy of the individual soul, which holds its life from God alone. Nevertheless, Angels, having witnessed the origin of man, watched his development, and made him their study, must have obtained an insight into what passes in his mind which to us would appear to be marvellous.

I now come to a matter which I will preface by quoting two passages from the chapter on Angels in Mr Mozley's great work on "The Word." He does not quite fall in with my conclusion about guardian Angels, but he states a difficulty which hangs over people's

minds, and which, necessarily, I have been thinking about ever since I began this book.

“Everything we are told about the Almighty and His operations points to infinite agency in infinite degrees. The argument that we neither see Angels, nor are able to conceive what they are like, nor to be sure of their interference with us, can have no weight with those who believe in God at all, or in anything unseen.” And again :

“There is no declaration in the whole Bible more serious or fuller of authority than that every Christian, however humble, has Angels specially charged with his welfare, and still beholding the face of our Heavenly Father, and so in His presence. Now this is what Christians believe ‘the Word’ does for them, so they are at some loss to understand why Angels are wanted in the matter. We have no right to entertain any such difficulty. If God is pleased, and Christ is pleased, to employ Angels as He employs apostles and evangelists, priests, deacons, and many other agencies and means, it is to our loss, or at our peril, that we demur to accept the service¹.”

¹ “The Word,” by Rev. T. Mozley. Chap. LIX. p. 333—4. Longmans, Green & Co.

The difference between Christ and the Angels as to their nature is not one of degree but of kind. For man's spiritual world to be complete, it may perhaps be necessary that it should comprise beings both finite and infinite. He wants to feel that Heavenly beings can be made the happier by his doings, and, for this, they must be comparable with himself; and he also requires an infinite being who "sees the end and knows the good." I take this craving of his for infinitude to indicate that there is in him something which has to do with infinity.

Christ does know the future and Christ does know all the secret things of our hearts, and Angels do not. This is one difference, and a very palpable and broad one it is.

There is also, I think, a difference between what Christ does for us and what the Angels do for us, like that between the help we get from the friend from whom we have no secrets, and that which comes from the kindly sympathy of the outside world. What we get from the friend needs no saying; but we do not all see how much we get from living where many eyes are turned upon us. For most

persons there is some kind of outside public, which, in mere virtue of its multitude, does for them what an individual could not do. The concourse of Angels which I suppose to surround us may render us assistance in this way.

There is something in a crowd, when it is in touch with us, that lifts us up and sets us at our best. The musician and the speaker are carried out of themselves by an enthusiastic audience, while empty benches take away their heart. This does not all come of gratified vanity; it comes very largely also of our delight in *sympathy*. The contact with different personalities and with many personalities at the same time has a vivifying influence upon us. I recollect a German professor saying that neither his friends nor the world of critics enabled him to do without his *class*¹. He felt a void when he was without that. When he admired something in a passage and pointed it out, and they admired too, then he felt that each youth's admiration had in it something which he had himself inspired, and that he had set

¹ "That is," said he, "*mein publicum*, and that I must have."

other personalities to work so that they gave him back variations of his own air: it was as if each student had brought his own candle and lighted it from him, making the room brighter for everybody. If we realised in this way that an Angel concourse partly took their happiness from ours, would not that intensify our lives?

"A sad lot," some will say, "these Angels of yours are to have—they are to be full of love for all created things and yet they are to look on and see one sort devour another; and to endure the sight of the misery which passes among men. If, as there are some who maintain, the evil upon earth outweighs the good, each of your Angels must be the sadder for regarding it, and the more numerous and the more sensitive these Angels are the greater becomes the balance of ill. Is this the comfort of which you held out hopes? It saddens us to think we make the Angels sad, and they again are sadder because we grieve, and so the action passes to and fro."

I have said elsewhere what I have to say¹ on the great problems of moral evil and

¹ *Pastor Pastorum*, Chaps. II. and III.

free-will, round which we are hovering here. By bringing Angels as intermediaries on to the scene we do not touch the vital parts of these questions; "the riddle of the painful earth" remains unaffected. The old enigmas of life are, by this way of looking at things, merged sometimes in wider ones, that is all. This querist of mine is not a mere figment; I have rarely talked to friends on the subject without his rising up; as indeed it was right and natural he should. What I answer is something like this.

If there were no sadness among the Angels, how could there be any joy? You can no more have exultation without anxiety than you can have light in a picture without shade. But, going to the gist of the matter, I refuse to own that happiness is "our being's end and aim." It is an outcome of the *summum bonum* no doubt, but not a steady measure of it, still less is it the thing itself; we find it by the way when we are hunting after something else; often we carry it about us and never give it a thought. What Christ offers as the highest good, is "eternal life"¹

¹ Mark x. 30.

and that comes of our having in us a sense of communion with God¹. The antithesis in His words is not between happiness and pain, but between life and the destruction of Gehenna². It is into *life* that men are to strive to enter, even if it cost them an eye or a hand³. Deadness and apathetic indifference are more opposed to life than is even actual pain³.

This world affords the Angels a better field for their interest by reason of its being crossed with ill. If things in it could not go any way but the right one, would not life upon earth be less varied and less full? If there were no wrongs to right, no tyranny to brave, no suffering to overcome by the enduring it; aye, and if there were no dulness to put up with—a foe that stifles more souls than excitement consumes—half the good that Angels make it their office to mark would remain unborn. If men had remained in Milton's Garden of Eden, what poor creatures they would have been. It is the

¹ John xvii. 3.

² Mark ix. 43, also Matth. vii. 13, 14.

³ Luke ix. 60.

“thorns and thistles” which have made us what we are.

As to these *castings up* of the good and the ill in the world, the Angels must smile as they see people striking the balance. A vast proportion of the well-being in the world is not understood by those who possess it. Is this unconscious happiness brought into account? It will terribly upset calculations if, by any oversight, it has been left out: for the significance of this item is great, because there is nothing to set off against it. There can be no such thing as unconscious *unhappiness*; for a man who does not think himself unhappy is not so in fact. Besides, the Angels might say, “We too are part of the Universe. How do you estimate the happiness of spiritual beings? You speak of the good and ill in God’s world, but the only world you know is that of man in the body; while hosts of us, out of the body, know good and evil of a thousand kinds which you are not constructed to understand.”

The mere fact however that this complaint is made gives me just what I want. It serves as a warrant for what I said in page 125.

“You feel keenly enough about these Angels,” I say to the querist, “Why did you never feel the like concern on behalf of Christ and of God? They see more to grieve them than Angels do, for they are aware of the wickedness lying in men’s hearts, even if the evil does not come to the birth. If God and Christ can put up with the world may not Angels do so too? Why are you more sensitive about them than about Christ and God? Is not this owing to that of which I spoke just now? Is it not because they seem nearer akin to you; partly because of their limitations, and partly because, if we are one day to be like them, their powers and qualities must be expansions of something we know, in the germ, in ourselves.

God, you say, is everywhere and that puzzles you, but you can believe that you have the attention of an Angel, all to yourself. Before God, too, all, you will say, is spread out on a map—past and present and future are one—this lifts Him into a plane remote from your own; but Angels watch a man who is wavering, not knowing which way he will turn, almost as we might do.

Again, since God is all-powerful you find it hard to understand how he can allow himself to be grieved ; but Angels you can easily picture as sorrowing over men. All this shows that there is a moral potency in a creed which brings these intermediate intelligences within your spiritual ken. New sympathies are awakened, enlarging and enforcing the duties that you knew. Angels may do for you what the thought of the home fireside does for a youngster who is roaming the world, and who knows that there is no grief or gladness at home to be compared to that which comes from news of him.

Furthermore I like to think, when I see what is beautiful, that a number of Angels are enjoying it too. I say *a number*, for the indefiniteness of the conception is part of its charm. At this point, quitting the region of authority I float off into speculation, where I can have things all my own way. I know that in speaking of beauty, visible beauty, I set loose a host of tongues ; beauty, some will say, is subjective, it comes of human faculty and human eye : but *my* Angels, I assert, delight in beauty ; perceiving it, probably, not

through organs like ours, but in some more immediate way, and drawing from it joys more varied and intense than we in the body can know.

Here at the end of my chapter I am going to give my fancy play. I will imagine myself rambling alone, on a summer evening, somewhere along the Channel shores. I come of a sudden on a dip in the cliffs, and down the combe there opens out a gorgeous view of sunset over the sea. A three-mast vessel is rounding the headland with all her canvas set, and such is the slant of her sails, that full upon them comes the crimsoned light; the sight will be gone in a moment and there is no one near whom I can call to see. Never again shall I catch, all together, what goes to make the scene—this pomp of clouds, this sheen of purpled sky and sea, this happy bearing of the noble ship. What a waste it seems that no one should see this but me! and would all its gladdening power have failed of effect if I had not chanced to come by? A possession for *me* no doubt it was. I might keep it by me all my life long, but something in me revolted against my having

it all to myself. I liked to assure myself thus. "Hosts of Angels saw it, Angels who, gifted with keener sense than we can reckon of, make all that is lovely in the world their own," and then I ventured to go on and say, "The Angels knew that I saw it along with them; and because I enjoyed it, and was pleased to think that they were enjoying it too, they themselves enjoyed it all the more."

CHAPTER VI.

IF we can imagine Heavenly Beholders watching us, and throwing themselves with loving interest into the varied motives of human life, then a fresh motive-power comes into our mental world. The sense of duty to beings who love us, and whose happiness we help to make or mar, will serve as a new masterspring of our doings; one which will be less likely to go wrong and do mischief than any motive that is worked by fear; and we shall less often need to have recourse to the "sanction," as it is called, of future punishment and reward. This we can reserve for grave matters, while for the lighter ones, and in dealing with children especially, it may be sufficient if we insist on the point—that our well doing gives pleasure, and our ill doing gives pain, to myriads of spiritual beings, who love us greatly, without our having any claim upon their love.

We ought to aim, I suppose, at getting the thought of self out of one's mind, but if we estimate every act by what will come of it, if not in this life then in the next, this keeps that thought alive. It must surely be more wholesome for a man to resolve "This I will not do because it would distress the Angels who love me," than to say in his heart "I would grasp this indulgence if I only dared, but I dread the consequences in a future state." If a man says to himself, "I, by my wickedness, am making immortal beings unhappy and all because they care for me"; this will find out a soft place in his heart, if there is one in it at all.

Take an instance from common family life. Let us suppose a home in which there is an unmanageable boy, one of those with whom "nothing can be done"; suppose, too, that as he gets older he grows worse and that there seems a danger of his passing from mere mischief on to evil of a more serious kind. Scoldings he turns into jokes, and for punishment he does not care a straw. Trouble, however, as he is, his mother loves him none the less. One day he sees her crying bitterly,

and he finds out that it is all about him. This is a revelation to him and a shock. "Don't cry, mother," he says, and there is a falter in his voice not common with him, "I can't bear it, and I am not worth crying about, indeed, indeed I am not." The mother's sorrow did what her anger could never have done.

Now there are Angels about us all, and they love us as the mother loved her boy. "I cannot tell you," I would say, "why they think you worth loving, but love you they do. I am sure of that. God has dropt into them something of His own capacity for loving, and it comes as naturally to them to love you as it did to the mother to love her son." The more the boy declared that he was not worth loving, the more his mother loved him, and perhaps the Angels may deal in a similar manner with us.

A point in the parallel worth noting is this: The grief of the Angels is uncomplaining, just as that of the mother was at the time when it took hold upon the lad. So long as the boy was found fault with, he had excuse and rejoinder at hand; his strong combative spirit came to his support and he

joined battle with his upbraiders ; sometimes he half persuaded himself that he was rather ill-used ; but when scolding and coercion were given up, the combative spirit evaporated, being unresisted, and self-reproach had it all its own way. In like manner, the thought of heavenly beings grieving over us without ever hinting at reproach for being made to grieve, is strangely affecting.

When the boy said, "I am not worth it," his true self spoke. Masterful as he seemed, given to brag and to swagger, he had no great opinion of himself at heart. Indeed one of the first steps towards a cure was to make him feel that he was worth a very great deal, only in a perfectly different way from any he had ever thought of. I talk of the case as though it were a real one because most people's memories will furnish an instance on which they can fix their thoughts.

A great deal of what was wrong in the lad belonged to the parts on his little social stage which his companions put on him to play. He had got a repute in a certain cast of character, so to say ; and this, he felt, he was always expected to take. Consequently

he did take it, when among his companions, and never suspected the danger of really becoming what he was pretending to be. Boys of a certain age have an imaginary existence, running by the side of their actual one, which gets confused with it now and then. There is a kind of stage performance that goes on among themselves concurrently with their more prosaic lives; and this particular youth, we may suppose, took the part of the dare-devil or the derider of authority and of everything that was humdrum and correct. He was himself quite aware that he was only making believe, and rather wondered that he was taken so seriously as he was. With all his boastful talk he would be apt to despond a little sometimes (but only one friend knew of this), and at times he would even doubt whether he would ever "be of any good"; no sooner, however, did he see his mother crying about him, than all the folly of the make-believe world in which he lived rose before his mind, and all his stage parts were thrown at once to the winds; he had a real self underneath them all; this was now touched to the quick,

and he seemed to learn for the first time what it was to feel. In this way it came about that the mother won back her own boy.

Now a good many people are playing stage parts in life, almost as the boy was, only the real boy and the stage boy may be separated without much trouble ; whereas the man and his parts, social, professional, and what-not, are so mixed up, and have been acting upon one another in complex ways so long, that it is very difficult to say how much of the being, whom we know as Mr "Such-a-one," is political leader, or lawyer, or man of business, and how much is the personal and particular *man*. Hard, no doubt, it must always be to isolate that essential principle which makes John Brown, John Brown.

When the world credits people with any special acquirement or faculty, the possessor is usually tenacious about keeping up his character for it ; a man knows that he has a name for an aptitude in some department of his business or profession, or that he has a social reputation of some particular sort. This puts upon him a certain *rôle* which he makes his own, and he is more hurt by breaking down

in this speciality than by graver failure in other ways.

I heard, years ago, of a rich business man in the city who died of a broken heart after the crash of a company in which he had shares. "It is not the loss of the money," he said, "heavy as it is I can stand that, but what is killing me is the thought that just where I was supposed to be wise I have turned out such a terrible fool. I have been in business all my life, and was looked up to as a clear-sighted man, yet a hundred things ought to have shown me that in this matter something was wrong. I have turned out a failure in the one line in which I was supposed to be good—there is nothing left me in life, let me die." The native self in this case had lost its elasticity, it had got stiffened into its *rôle*; it could not expand or supply new interest and new energies to take the room that was vacated; so an inner void remained and the man collapsed.

I say then to my reader, "What the Angels want to get at is this real self of yours, not your professional or business or ideal self, nor the self that goes out in society." "The

work you are about," they may say, "is not without worth of its own—cling to your faith in it fast—but we value it, as much as anything, for what it makes of you." What you produce may be worth something, taken by itself, but it goes for next to nothing when it is set by the side of a soul that is being trained for the Resurrection to Life.

A fancy once came into my head as I saw a party of children acting their little play, and as this falls in very well with what I have been talking of, I will set it down here. The Christmas holidays at my host's had been taken up with preparations among the young people for a theatrical display. The day fixed for the performance arrived. A stirring piece had been chosen, as you may suppose. One character was an Indian Chief, terrible in paint and in his dancing plumes, and one was a bold buccaneer. Then there was a heroine who was always being carried off, and a gallant British tar who rescued everybody out of critical situations in the very nick of time. Neither children nor anyone else can play without an audience; this the relations of the little actors formed. The children gave

themselves up to the illusion, they threw themselves so earnestly into their parts that their little identities seemed to be lost. "To themselves, for the moment," said I to myself, "they are what they act, chiefs or pirates, heroines or tars, going through adventures to curdle the blood; but to their fathers and mothers looking on, they are nothing whatever all the time but Arthur and Harry and Ellen and Jane." What most pleased the parents was that the elder boy was not impatient with his little sister when she did not remember her part.

Now the Angels form an audience for us in this life of ours, and with them, too, the man goes for more than his part; we shall act with all our spirit if we feel them to be by. "The Angels must find it very dull," some one may say, "looking on everlastingly at the doings of commonplace people: take, for instance, that city clerk going on the same omnibus to the same office at the same hour every day." Now I do not believe that Angels are ever dull, which to some of us may seem strange; neither do I believe that they ever find any of God's creatures common-

place and uninteresting, and this may seem perhaps stranger still. Rather do I conjecture, that knowing what a dangerous trial a dull and monotonous life is, their spirits go forth in sympathetic succour to those who fight manfully against this particular influence, of the depressing weight of which few take proper account.

You, possibly, as a guest at that Christmas play, might have found it a little tiresome towards the close, and it might have crossed your mind that a good many of the small performers were very ordinary little boys and girls ; but the parents present did not find the play tiresome a bit ; and my Angels take after them.

If we suppose that a host of Angels are looking on at us, somewhat in the spirit with which the parents regarded the children's play, we may be not very far from the actual fact ; and this way of looking at things will do us good. It will help us to throw more spirit into everything that we do, not only from the fresh vitality which the sense of company pours into us, but also because it will make us say to ourselves, "This world of

ours, which it is rather the way to cry down, must be worth my caring for, if Angels care for it so much"; and having got so far we may recollect that Christ cared for it infinitely too. For this notion of Angels, recollect, I have represented not as one to rest in, but as helping to bring us nearer to Christ and to God. "How is it," you may go on to ask, "that where we find a wearisome sameness, with nothing salient to catch the fancy or attract our notice, the Angels should be all alive with eager contemplation as you say they are." There may be endless reasons, I reply, but I need give only one.

Angels, being like ourselves personal, find special interest in what has character of its own. They sympathise strongly with individual life, and they can discern what is distinctive and individual when to unpurged eyes each specimen seems like the rest. The differences between things of a kind, or animals of a sort, or men and women who would be classed as of one description, come out more strongly the better the little details are made out. Sheep, to the Londoner, seem all alike, but the shepherd knows the faces of everyone of his flock.

Things are not commonplace when you know something about them. You would find plenty to think about in the commonest birds, sparrows and starlings and rooks, if you could examine how they were constructed, and how they live, and, as the child says, "how they are when they are at home."

In like manner, the better we men come to understand one another, and the further we dive down below the coating of sameness, the greater will be our interest in human life; the more good, too, as I believe, shall we find in it, and the better gleaners of this good shall we become. This last is no small matter, seeing that we have a right to believe that there is in us a germ of capacity for becoming ourselves fellow-gleaners along with the Angels, of the good, moral and spiritual, which is evolved in the course of events. If you could only know all that goes on in the soul, even of what you would call a very commonplace person—such a one as could not possibly be brought into a novel excepting by way of a foil—you would find more to admire than you dream of, and a call for more study and thought than perhaps you would care to give. I am going a step below the merely common-

place person, in the next picture which I shall throw on the screen.

We sometimes hear people lament, though only in a half serious way, it is true, over that prolongation of "useless existences" which, sinning as it does against the "survival of the fittest," is, so they say, leading our civilisation to perish of its very virtues, its philanthropy and tenderness of heart. Questions like this lie out of my way, but I have by me a little story which shows how out of such a "useless existence" a very real and enduring good once came.

I have chanced upon a true story : it is a very touching one, no doubt, but there is something cheering in it too, for it points to the discovery of a mine of good in a celebrated man which he hardly knew of himself. The following is extracted from the Memoirs of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the great American writer ; he is relating what took place on his visit to the West Derby Workhouse, near Liverpool :

Under date February 28, 1856—

"After this, we went to the ward where the children were kept, and, on entering this, we saw, in

the first place, two or three unlovely and unwholesome little imps, who were lazily playing together. One of them (a child about six years old, but I know not whether girl or boy) immediately took the strangest fancy for me. It was a wretched, pale, half-torpid little thing, with a humour in its eyes which the Governor said was the scurvy. I never saw, till a few moments afterwards, a child that I should feel less inclined to fondle. But this little, sickly, humour-eaten fright prowled around me, taking hold of my skirts, following at my heels, and at last held up its hands, smiled in my face, and standing directly before me, insisted on my taking it up! Not that it said a word, for I rather think it was under-witted, and could not talk; but its face expressed such perfect confidence that it was going to be taken up and made much of, that it was impossible not to do it. It was as if God had promised the child this favour on my behalf, and that I must needs fulfil the contract. I held my undesirable burden a little while; and, after setting the child down, it still followed me, holding two of my fingers and playing with them, just as if it were a child of my own. It was a foundling, and out of all human kind it chose me to be its father! We went upstairs into another ward; and, on coming down again, there was this same child waiting for me, with a sickly smile round its defaced mouth, and in its dim-red eyes....I never should have forgiven myself if I had repelled its advances."

This reads like a page from the life of St Francis D'Assisi or of a missionary among the lepers. About the narrative itself not a word need be said. More beings, as I believe, than those whom human eyes beheld, saw that child taken up in Hawthorne's arms, and their whispers may have had a share in bringing it about.

A visitor, who passed through that ward of the workhouse and caught sight of this half torpid little thing, would have set down its existence as so much dead loss. An "un-productive consumer" no doubt it was, but yet if the bringing to light of moral and spiritual good be, as I maintain it is, one of the purposes for which this planet was made habitable by men and women, then that child has not a little to show for its few years of life, although they were passed in the children's ward of the West Derby Workhouse. Its own latter days—it is not likely to have lived long—were brightened by one happy memory; while the life of Nathaniel Hawthorne was vastly enriched, for he had brought into working a new mine of tenderness, and all we who read the Memoirs get great good.

I like to suppose that the Angels of that company who have little children specially in charge, took this half-witted urchin for the central figure in a little parable of action, which they thought might be serviceable to those who were asking "What is the good of it?" about everything they heard of. This parable of theirs brings to light one out of the many ways in which the evolving of spiritual good is brought about—I mean the way in which need brings out compassion. Let us suppose our eyes so purged as to enable us to make out the Angels at their work. Those Angels, I will suppose, lighted upon the right man and brought him as a stranger to see the Liverpool Workhouse when the child was in the ward. They whispered to the child, "Some one is here who will love you." That child (I feel sure it was a little girl) had hungered after affection all through her workhouse life, and at once she divined that the tall stranger was her friend. He made no motion towards her. Those who fascinate children most are not always those who notice them greatly; but the child went to Hawthorne and claimed

him as a parent, and the Angels whispered to him that the child felt that God had promised it that it should be taken up in his arms. It is not everyone who would have owned this whisper as coming from God, or felt the solemn force of that child's insisting on it that he was sent by God to love her.

It was by voices from within that God spake to the patriarchs; they might own these voices for God's as Jacob did, or pass them by as Esau, we may suppose, would have done; they had their choice and reaped their return. Those who are of God know God's voice; so Hawthorne took the child in his arms and lifted it up. Not only was the joy of the child supreme—that one moment justified it in having lived so long—not only was Hawthorne's being lighted up by something from within, but all the company of the Angels of God rejoiced at the sight.

Another point which, if it came by hazard, was a marvellous piece of luck is this: The man on whom the Angels lighted, when they wanted to give their child this treat, was a writer of books, and had a way of his own of telling what he saw, so that people should

enjoy reading about it ; and he has set down in a book this account of his afternoon in that workhouse ward, whereby the world is very much the richer. These Angels, I like to suppose, were so transported with what they saw that they would not keep it to themselves, and so they whispered to Hawthorne to have it preserved, in order that for generation after generation it might radiate out its good into the world.

Our Lord has shown us one use of affliction which we should never have thought of by ourselves, and this story of the child calls His lesson to mind.

St John tells us : Chapter ix. v. 1, 2, 3—

“ And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind ? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin nor his parents ; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

The only use for this blind man that the disciples could think of was, that he might serve for a warning against sin, but our Lord quietly puts their notions by ; He points out one purpose which the blind beggar was to

fulfil. "The works of God should be made manifest in him." Something infinite, in the way of good brought to pass, comes into the scale here; I do not say that the man was born blind on purpose for this. It is very misleading for us to attribute a purpose to Providence; God sees so many ways in which an event may take effect upon the world. But a certain good came to the universe owing to the fact of the existence of this blindness, and that is all I want.

Do not the needs of infirmity often bring out unsuspected tenderness, assiduity and self-sacrifice in people of rugged nature, on board ship for instance, or in the crowded courts of our great towns? Are not "the works of God" manifested in cases such as these? Consider how often a man first comes to know himself, and to know all the goodness of his wife, or child, in the weeks or months during which his last sickness, which is sometimes almost his first, is dragging on.

I doubt with respect even to this singularly afflicted child, whether some faint glow of happiness, unconscious happiness of course, did not illumine its little existence. Perhaps

the light came from some dim dream that she would one day find somebody to care for her. The happiness or unhappiness of children comes so much from what "they make out of their own heads."

I must leave my story to teach for itself the further lessons which lie behind it, and I pass on to the practical fruit which I want these notions of mine to bear. One kind of action which is of wide operation is, I think, the sense of company which the belief in angels' presence brings. This frees us from loneliness of soul; it takes the selfishness out of our joys, and the corrosive poison out of our griefs. A trouble that is nursed in secret embitters a man's disposition and deadens his energy; but as soon as the fresh air gets at it, and it is shared among sympathising friends its ill qualities are done away.

Those who most know the poor will understand best what a comfort this sense of "company" will be to them. They will welcome the Angels, with whom, indeed, they have never quite lost touch; they will rejoice in the notion of their being about them when they are all alone. Hand-workers suffer

more from loneliness than head-workers do. The wife watching in her cottage for her husband's coming home ; the handicraftsman all by himself, doing some work which does not engage his mind ; the labourer who has a lonely job in an out-lying field and a long solitary walk home ; all these will find it a blessing to have their minds peopled with Heavenly beings who love them, who are not above taking interest in what interests them, and, what is most of all, who are grieved about them when they suffer or when they go wrong. This sympathy in suffering is the keystone of the whole.

A poor man's life will become quite another thing when he brings the Angels into it. Suppose that on his way to work he passes a child in trouble, and setting it right as well as he can, he brightens it up by a smile and a re-assuring tone ; or that as he comes home in the evening he goes a little out of his way to help an old woman, laden with a heavy faggot, over a stile. Even little things like this, he may be told, go to swell the joy in Heaven—joy that lasts for ever. Through his doing, something pleasant to recall, which will

never pass away, will be stored for ever in Angels' minds in Heaven. Here is a new thought and a great one for him to carry home.

There are urchins in London by scores, hungry and sorely tempted to steal, but struggling against their temptations with a courage and endurance that God and the Angels only know. Great is the Angels' delight when the child turns victorious away from the treasure exposed on the stall; great is their sympathy with the hardships that fall to his lot; they whisper to those who can help him; they suggest ways in which help may be given, and their suggestions fall on good ground now and then. Surely we might venture to tell a child, "Angels were looking on as you stood with hungry gaze before that open stall, and they brightened with gladness as you turned away."

But Angels are more than passive Beholders, and it is as active agents that they will be most recognised by the poor. They may be employed in endless ways of which we can form no idea, but we have Scripture

warrant for supposing that they call things to remembrance (St Luke xxiv. 6, 7), and it is not going much farther to suppose that they put thoughts into people's minds. We cannot be wrong in telling a man, that an inward prompting to right may be the whisper of an Angel of God. "I was terribly tempted just now," a poor man may tell you, "to do something which might have been my ruin, but something said 'Don't,' and I didn't." "Give a thought," we may say, "to what that something was. Be sure you are worth saving or that something would not have said Don't."

Turning to another point : our fellowship with the Angels may be turned to excellent account, when we want to talk to the little ones about right and wrong and an after life, and Christ and God.

No one I suppose would now terrify children with the picture of hell which used to be held up. To some it caused serious nervous evils of various kinds, and with a great many it laid the foundations of an unreality of belief. Now the Angel world, or rather the thought of it, offers to children

just the resting place they want when their spirits are trying their little wings, making aloft for Heaven. They hardly venture to imagine God looking into their nursery; but they can fancy Angels there, coming and going, night and day, seeing all their little troubles, and how they have really tried to be good. They have no fear of the Angels, they are not awed by them, they would not stop their play and their prattle if they thought they were by, looking on at their game. Indeed they take so readily to the idea of Angels that it almost seems as if it fell in with some old recollection that they had brought with them into the world. Why the Angels should care about him—a question which a man sometimes asks—is no puzzle to a child at all, for he instinctively claims kindness and help from people about him; and this gives the teacher a hold, for the child will see that he must not distress the Angels who love him of their own free choice. The Angel, he might be told, might remain quite happy in himself if he liked, but he goes out of himself to care for little boys like him; and so he is made unhappy by observing their

evil tempers, their little jealousies, and their failing to tell the truth.

It must be better for children to be swayed in heavenly matters by feelings of love than to bow to a command which is backed by fear. So long as love will keep the child's heart right and its way straight, we had better not be in a hurry to send it to look, in spiritual concerns, to the consequences which its acts may bring upon itself. It is always love, recollect, to which Christ makes His *first* appeal. He did not say, "Keep my commandments if you wish to attain eternal life," but, "If you *love* me, keep my commandments."

Angels, I would tell the children, care for you all alike, rich and poor, clever and stupid, dirty and clean. Master and Miss in their trim nursery, and the urchins playing in the murky court at the back of the mews, are to the Angels only so many infant souls started in the world to run by different routes to the same goal. They are souls that have come into the world to be schooled and tested and sorted. This schooling is of different kinds and some of the kinds may be rough enough ;

but possibly where the schooling is somewhat hard, the lessons which the Angels care most about may be learned the best and differences may be more brought out.

“Besides caring for all you small people, and other grown-up ones as well,” I can conceive a teacher to go on, “Angels love all dumb creatures, and they like you to love them and show kindness to them; and when you stop and look at them and wonder at their being so mightily busy, you may fancy that Angels are looking on along with you. You know what care you take of the canary at home because it was the pet of your sister, who is far away. Look on all living creatures as the Angels’ pets.”

“The animals are all happy in their own way because they answer their end. ‘We were made for life and we live,’ that is what that buzzing of the flies on the ivy blossom seems to say this autumn afternoon. These Angels, too, will carry you an endless way back in the history of the universe, for they were by, and perhaps helping—implanting an instinct or the like—when the kinds of creatures about you came to be what they

are. For a long time there were no men and women to enjoy the beauty of the world, but it was not lost, for the Angels took it in with delight. Those red admiral butterflies remind you perhaps of the time when you were first able to notice butterflies; they seem to carry you a very long way back—three or four whole years—but they carry Angels through periods that you cannot count. The butterflies you see to-day are the great grandchildren of those you first saw, but they seem to you as if they were the very same that you first knew, because the species, as we older people call it, always goes on. The Angels, however, recollect the birth of the species itself, and go back to times when there were no butterflies at all—far less any little boys and girls—and the sight of those rooks that are just thinking of going home, may take them back to the recollection of the earliest stock from which the rook family came, and even back to the very first thing that ever flew. That, I have heard say, was called a pterodactyl, a creature which lived in a sort of slush of blue mud which covered great tracts in early times. He, one day, being

hotly pursued by something which wanted to eat him, flung himself by a gigantic effort out of the slime, and finding that by vigorous flapping he could keep himself up, he set flying going and the fashion took."

In this way Angels and animals link us with the past, and furnish lessons as to the way in which all living things are bound together in love. Moreover, we feel less ephemeral when we have made friends with an Angel who saw the pterodactyl's first attempt at flying, or who, possibly, put the notion into his head.

I have no space to spare for working round from topic to topic so I pass straight to the next point on which I have something to say. That point, which will not long detain us, is this :

If God and the Angels delight in the happiness of all created things, they delight in our particular happiness as well, and if we make ourselves unhappy without reason, we fail to contribute as we ought to do to the sum total of positive good in the world. Happiness, as we commonly regard it, may not in itself be our being's end and aim ;

there may indeed be some kinds of suffering which we would not exchange for it. But it is, in general, the concomitant and outcome of the healthy and harmonious working together of all that goes to make us what we are; and the Angels view it as a result which is satisfactory as far as it goes. In beings of a high order they look for something beyond. But the chronic unhappiness that comes of a man's own self, from fretting over fancied slights and wrongs, or over little blunders that cannot be rectified, or from morbid sensitiveness or discontent—this they deplore as so much waste of the well-being of the world. A man who ought to be happy and is not so, in their eyes robs the universe of its due.

Sir John Lubbock begins his capital little book on the Pleasures of Life, with a chapter on the Duty of Happiness, to which I refer my readers, for I cannot now play the systematic moralist myself. What particularly makes me refer to this matter is that the view of our relations to Angels which I have put forward, presents this subject in a new light. It supplies what the Stoics, quoted by Sir John, could not reach, it gives us a

motive for cultivating an active and cheerful mind, from considerations *outside ourselves*.

We are looking to make *Angels* happy, whereas with the Stoics all came back to the *man's own good*; it was their own selves who were to profit by their philosophy. People felt that there was something wanting in this doctrine, and it never caught hold of the mass; it did not offer what they wanted; it did not lead them to lose thought of themselves in their anxiety to do good and make some other being happy; and something told them that this was required. When we take a holiday with a companion, who we know has been overworked and wants recreation, and we make it our one object that *he* shall get out of his holiday all possible enjoyment and good,—the thought of our own gratification never crossing our mind,—then we are unconsciously happy ourselves and it does us good. The Angels, who are before our minds, will be to us like this companion. We behold in them beings with whom we can sympathise, whom we desire to make happy, and who we believe like to see us happy; for there is no happiness or unhappi-

ness in the world but is their concern. Our interest in the Angels helps us to forget ourselves; this supplies that something outside to hold by, which the Stoics lacked.

But of all that Christ tells us about Angels what must have the weightiest practical effect is that we may look to becoming "like unto the Angels" ourselves. Our work hereafter may be like Angels' work and our joys like Angels' joy.

Angels' work and Angels' joy go together, for their joy, or a great deal of it, arises out of their work. God operates through the Angels, and the sense of His working in them fills them with a pure delight. There is no happiness known to man like that which comes—rarely, alas, to most of us—from feeling that God is working in us "both 'to will and to work for His good pleasure'." This, which with even the best of us, is only a passing gleam, yields to the Angels the steady light in which they dwell. They find, no doubt, much that distresses them in what they see: but they look deeper into the uses and lessons that human suffering carries

¹ Philippians ii. 13.

with it than we can do. Pain, they know, is not pure loss, it often purifies the soul and stimulates its growth towards perfection.

If their work, indeed, was all success, unbroken and unchecked by obstacles, would not its interest flag? If their joy were not matched with sadness, how should they know it to be joy? They do not, I feel sure, count up their pleasures and their pains, congratulating themselves when the balance falls on the right side, and complaining when it does not: they may grieve greatly on occasion; they may feel acute sorrow at the sight of ills they cannot cure; but they will own that their sense of compassion and their indignation at wrong are most precious elements in their being.

It is, however, to the work in heaven, more than to the joy, that I want to draw attention now. We have authority for supposing that operation of some sort, the putting forth of energy in some spiritual action, such as the exercise of attention or the arriving at a resolve, is an essential concomitant of spiritual being. Our Lord says, "My Father worketh

“hitherto, and I work¹,” and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the Son as “upholding all things by the word of his power².” If the Father and Christ are ever engaged in *doing*, surely we may suppose that the Angels are so as well. It must make a prodigious difference in all that concerns our moral being, whether we look forward to a heaven of tranquillity and bliss, or to a sphere in which the faculties developed upon earth shall find full play.

Our characters take after the kind of heaven which we set before our eyes. If to reach a haven of rest is the highest hope we entertain, then we shall look on the necessity for work as a mere molestation, a calamity incident to our imperfect state. We shall do as little as we can, and that little, being done grudgingly, will do us no good. If we look to a paradise of delights, we shall enjoy it in anticipation where we can, and so doing we may strain our imaginations in an injurious way. But if it forms part of our idea of everlasting life, that our faculties, mental and moral, should continue incessantly

¹ John v. 17.

² Heb. i. 3.

in play, and that we, as free agents, should direct these faculties to doing God's will; then we shall be careful to keep energy alive in ourselves, and we shall foster nascent energies in those who grow up by our side. For though such energies may not, of themselves, give a greater likelihood of attaining Heaven, they betoken a greater capacity of doing good work in it if ever it be reached.

There are two passages in the Gospels which give us glimpses of Angels engaged in their work. We see them rejoicing over a repentant sinner, and we contemplate them in the end as "gathering out of the kingdoms "of the Son of Man, all things that cause "stumbling¹," and as "gathering together "his elect from the four winds²." To fulfil these duties, there is need of watchfulness, and need of that scrutinising observation and insight into character, which can only come of love. It is love that reveals—you cannot know all that a man is unless you love him. One who looks to helping Angels in their work should make this world a school for lovingness. Let him begin by loving "what

¹ Matth. xiii. 41.

² Mark xiii. 27.

“he has seen”—every living thing that comes in his way—and he will go on to love the Angels too ; for they also love God’s creatures, and treasure up the good and happiness that is brought to light. Thus he may be brought, by easy steps, to love Christ and God, and, loving God, to come to know Him, which our Lord tells us is eternal Life¹.

We hear it said that men of the present generation are disenchanted with immortality, or at any rate are less eager about it than their fathers are supposed to have been. This, if it be true, may be due to something in the kind of immortality offered ; or to something in modern ways of living and thinking, or to both causes at once.

Our Lord gives no description of the kind of existence led by the “Sons of the Resurrection ;” neither has the Church done so in any authoritative way ; but the writers of hymns and manuals of devotion, forgetting how rash it is to speak where our Lord is emphatically silent, have thought to supply the want ; and their Heaven of worship may prove unattractive to persons of a stirring

¹ John xvii. 3.

mind. Different people will have different ideals, and no picture of Heaven that can be painted can possibly fall in with them all. Christ tells men only this—They will be like unto the Angels. Now the lines along which these Angels may proceed in the course of their labour must be endless in number; all having however one point in common, that in which they all meet in the glory of God.

I recollect that I could never care much for the hymn-book heaven when it was set before me as a boy. My counsel then to those who make the complaint above noticed would be this—Show men a life in which what there is in them can find full play, and they will be keen enough after that. Tell them that there is reason to believe that there may be as great a diversity both among the Angels of God and those who have become like unto them, as there is among men upon earth, and that all the blessed are not to be occupied, for all eternity, in the same way. It is diversity that infuses life and movement among mankind; and there is nothing more prized by our Lord¹ than what is individual

¹ See *Ecce Homo*, Preface to the fifth Edition.

and original in men. This diversity, which Nature seems contrived to promote, may serve purposes in the spiritual order as well as upon earth.

It is held out by our Lord as a comfort to the Apostles that "there are many mansions" (abiding places)¹ in His Father's House. What does this mean? Bishop Westcott says, I think rightly, that it does not indicate different limitations of future happiness; but diversity of some kind it certainly implies. It may be one of *function*, and this is the interpretation which I prefer. There might be one kind of work for Peter, one for Thomas, and another for Philip, and they might pass on from one kind of work or one stage of effectiveness to another. Each apostle might find somewhere the education or development that would suit him best. They are not to be depressed by supposing that there must be one course and one standard for all; there is room for each to render the service for which he is suited. "If it were not so,"—our Lord, comforting them after predicting

¹ John xiv. 2. Westcott, *Gospel of St John*. See the Bishop's notes.

Peter's denials, goes on to say—"if it were not so I would have told you."

The prospect of a diversity in the sort of activity we may put forth in Heaven, may attract us to it and bring us something of the same kind of comfort as that which our Lord, I think, meant to convey.

There will always be some who cannot care at all for a heaven, in which there is to be no eating and drinking, no marrying or giving in marriage, and, what with many will go for more—nothing in the way of mere amusement. These cases I leave to the preacher; and that I may not turn preacher myself, I will quote a most apposite passage from an American writer¹, who says what wants saying and says it in a way to make men listen.

"It is the frivolity of our lives that renders it hard to believe in immortality. If a man feels that his life is spent in expedients for killing time, he finds it hard to suppose that he is to go on for ever trying to kill eternity. It is when he thinks on the

¹ W. R. Alger, *Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*. 1878. Widdleton, New York.

littlenesses that take up his day, on the poor trifles he cares for, his pipe, his dinner, his ease, his games, his newspaper, that he feels so 'cramped, cribbed, cabined and confined' that he loses the power of conceiving anything vast or sublime, immortality among the rest. When a man rises in his aims and looks to the weal of the Universe, and the harmony of the soul with God, then we feel that extinction would be grievous,—that it would be waste of a plant brought by God towards perfection, towards comprehending God's work and longing to help in it and thereby becoming able to help in it, if at this moment it was to perish."

Sometimes lightness of mind is taken up as a refuge against despair; and sometimes this despair is deepened by the feeling that all passes by in a moment and is done with for ever. In these cases I would hope to have given a little help. I trust that my readers will feel that they do not pass through existence, like the bird that flew through the lighted banquet hall, out of the dark and into the dark again, with nothing to come of its having flown across.

Men are spiritual beings, free, and with wills of their own, and actual evil or good is evolved, in almost every motion they make. This is registered at every moment by Hosts of Angels who love them; their record forms a continuous picture of men's lives. There is so much more joy in the world from the good men do, while from the evil there is so much more grief. We disparage our life by saying that in a moment all will be past and gone: we encourage ourselves hereby in lightness of purpose and mind, and this is all wrong. The joy and the sorrow we cause in the spiritual world, do not pass out of existence, as though they had never been. Time, with heavenly beings, is not what it is to us; their memories do not fade owing to waste of brain; so that the good we do to them is a good for ever, while the evil that we cause is so much good taken away. (p. 122.)

It is especially cheering, to think that we men upon earth may render service to the Angels in Heaven. One service is this, we supply a field of operation; Heavenly beings, if not perfect—and perfect we do not suppose the Angels to be—must, I conceive, be enabled

to progress towards perfection, and will be eager to advance towards this perfection as a limit. Their qualities and faculties will be developed in their work, and a great part of that work lies among men. The study of character and of the influences that determine it, and the delight of witnessing the growth of a noble spirit, or the evolution of good out of seeming evil, may greatly help to unfold their qualities and powers.

This service we render in our lifetimes. There may possibly be another kind of service, one of a more positive kind, which we may render to them hereafter.

It is the business of the Angels, as we have seen, to watch sinners with the hope of seeing them repent, and they will be employed, so our Lord tells us, in sifting out the good from the bad. May it not be God's purpose that some should be associated with them in their work, who had known, by actual experience, what an Angel cannot know of himself; such influences, that is to say, as the pressure of toil, the force of human passions and the effects of family ties? If we men had to judge about the animals, how

invaluable would be the help of one who could remember having been an animal himself! May we not in a similar way bring to the Angels light about men? May not this, indeed, be among the functions which those who "shall be accounted worthy" may be intended to subserve?

The witness function of the Angels was that upon which my thoughts just chanced, and which I particularly wanted to bring into light. But it is as God's messengers that Angels are most known to us all. We may hope that sometimes messages may come to us; and we may be encouraged to mark junctures in the lives of men in which such agencies may have played a part. God in the visible world acts through *means*, and not by the mere *fiat* of His will, and this favours the belief that in the spiritual order as well, God may bring His ends about, through the agency of such beings as the Angels of God, of whom the Scriptures speak. May not the Angels, in seeking the right word and the right moment to breathe it, avail themselves of the human understanding possessed by the "sons of the Resurrection" who are mated with them?

May not we, sometimes, be sent as messengers ourselves? (See p. 70.)

It will save us from saying about many matters, "Never mind, it will last my time," a habit which, more than anything, prematurely paralyses the old, if we imagine ourselves hereafter looking out on the world we have left, and taking just as deep an interest in it and in any movement we had set going, as we took when alive; only seeing everything with eyes purged from self-regard.

It will greatly help to carry us forward and keep our energies alive to the end, if we conceive it possible that we may not be merely silent and inactive spectators, but may sometimes be charged to whisper to men guiding or illuminating thoughts, that they may retain if they please. Such overseeing, on the part of those who shall become equal unto the Angels, need not be confined to what is moral and spiritual; we shall not hereafter, I think, draw lines, marking off things secular from things religious; still less shall we fancy that God's particular domain comprises only the last. I would conceive that even in science such whispers may possibly come.

In accounts of discovery we hear of "intuitions"; where did they drop from? I picture an earnest student of nature, with a heap of facts lying before him, like the pieces of a child's puzzle tumbled out on the floor, putting, tentatively, a patch together here and there. Very vividly too do I imagine the satisfaction of being myself permitted to whisper some such words as these, "Look at what lies before you from the point of view I will show, and all will come into order and the fragments will make up a whole." A still more "sacred and homefelt delight" it would be, if, the whisper having come to the right man, we should see him, by persevering exertion, bring all into range; so that undiscovered ways of God's action might be laid bare, and a new domain of nature be made over to the use and government of man. One word more, I must say, or men might miss a vital moral of my book.

Angels, by God's leave, may whisper to us a word now and then; but it is only God, who, as the Word or the Spirit, dwells with us, and gives us the sense of being in close and abiding communion with Himself.

Here my book on "The Service of Angels" comes to an end; but in the course of writing it, among other ideas which seemed to come and beckon me out of my way, there was one which was so persistent that I had to comply, and I worked it into a kind of Apologue, which I append. It runs in rather a lighter vein than what goes before, and it involves the notion of "angels who kept not their "first estate¹." I have not touched on such beings in the book itself, because questions would thereby have been raised which, if touched on at all, would require to be treated in a different manner from that which is used here.

¹ St Jude 6.

AN APOLOGUE.

As I was at work upon the foregoing, an idea came into my head, which I could not deal with at the time.

While reflecting how hard it was for those in the body to conceive life out of the body, I found that the deeper I looked into the matter the more difficulties I saw. Then I began to wonder how the case would appear if it were looked at from the other side. I thought that I would turn it round and see. Would not the housing together of mind and matter in one frame, the action of one on the other, and the passing on of existence from one body, that perishes, to another that rises out of the same, be startling ideas to those to whom life in a body would be as strange as life out of the body is to us?

The supposition of quasi-angelic beings who should deny the existence of Men and Women, just as the Sadducee denied that of

“Angel or Spirit,” drew my thoughts after it. It was to me a novel way of looking at the case.

It lies within the scope of imagination to conceive a class of spiritual beings, somewhat lower than the Angels of Scripture, who, whether by native inferiority, or by some fault of their own should have become, in a measure, segregated from the more blessed “Angels of God ;” so that they might never have spied the planet Earth, or heard of that great work of God’s, carried out on its surface, towards the perfecting of which some of their happier brethren might be lending their aid.

Suppose now, that to a group of such beings there is brought, all at once, the news of animated life full and various, just as we know it ; and that they hear particular accounts of Men and Women, beings, corporeal indeed, but whose spiritual claims were hardly lower than their own. How phantasmagorical all the story would appear. “Quite new conditions of thought” they would say “must be introduced, if minds are to work which are imprisoned in bodies lasting only for a time.” All their old experiences would

be belied and the universe they knew of would seem to be giving way.

Does it seem unlikely that at the sight of this appalling novelty, they might have turned to the single door of escape that they saw, and have employed all their skill to uphold their contention "This story about Men and Women cannot be true"? I thought that a moral might be extracted from this situation,—provided only that I left people to find it for themselves.

When an idea is presented to children which takes their fancy they are apt to run it into a story; and I discern a true instinct of self-improvement lying under this habit of theirs. They fix what is abstract and would otherwise be fleeting, by giving it form and colour and life. What the individual in his childhood does in a small way, that, the races of men in their infancy have done on a grand scale, and the poems and legends of old time are the result.

This notion of mine, too slight and too fantastic for treatment in a serious style, recalled the material out of which early oriental writers used to spin a kind of tale

which was called an Apologue: this, I said to myself, is just the form that suits the matter I have in my head.

So I made up a story for myself, if story it can be called, which might be headed thus.

“How certain Angels carried Great News to some brethren of theirs, and how it was received.”

On the occasion about which I speak, “The Morning Stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy¹.”

Why, all of a sudden, did this outburst of gladness come? It was not to hail the dawn of organic life—the appearance of living creatures who were as yet unknown. It was not the sight of the Medusæ, when they had begun to move in the waters, that made the hearts of the Angels leap with joy: there had been nothing in this phenomenon to awaken enthusiasm, and few even of the most far-sighted guessed to what this small beginning would grow. Some of the wisest had indeed been set pondering, “It can be for no small matter,” said they, “that God passes

¹ Job xxxviii. 7.

into action in a new way. Faint as are the beginnings of life, the passage from dead matter to living things is an infinite leap, a change not of degree but of kind." One said to the other, "We shall see greater things than these." So mused a few ; but the great host of spiritual existences, as their vision swept across the earth, looked upon these "moving creatures that had life" as a new marvel indeed of creative ingenuity, but one that would end with itself. There was nothing in what they saw to cause the thrill of joy of which I spoke. Age followed age, and imperceptibly, but not without God's guiding care, one form of being passed into another and life in infinite variety swarmed upon the earth ; all this, however, had come about by such small steps that at no one moment more than another had anything happened that might call forth this shout of Joy.

Neither was it when man was rendered physically complete, that this burst of gladness came. Eagerly indeed had Angels watched organic life advancing toward perfection, and finding in the human frame its crowning glory of function and of form ; but

man as yet was only the first of animals, he had struggled indeed into some kind of speech, and this speech helped him to new processes of mind ; but of God, and all that comes of the sense of God's presence in the world, not a hint, as yet, had crept into his brain. His capacities, as well as his desires, were bounded as we may suppose those of animals to be ; he was prompted to provide for the needs of his body and the carrying on of his race, and beyond this he did not look. Angels rejoiced to see him happy, to mark his courage and to watch the growth of his intelligence—but he had little in common with them, and when they tried to whisper to him he started like a frightened colt.

Thus far, creation had proceeded in one continuously curving line. Now came a sharp turn or break, as if things were starting afresh, and this it was which caused the Joy of which I speak. A manifestation of the Divine power, of an order similar to that which had first brought life upon the earth, had been put forth. A new faculty had dropped into the soul of man. This was the Spirit. "Body and Soul" (if by Soul

we mean understanding) man had possessed before: he was made up of three elements, "Spirit and Soul and Body¹" now.

New ideas stretching far away, views of things as being good and evil, and a sense of something beyond earth and earthly life, came into his mind. When Angels whispered he was now all ear, and great was their delight in their nursling. Hitherto man had lived well enough by "bread alone," but mere bodily well-being could no longer fill his heart; he craved for something beyond and beyond, and Angels were charged to bring him "Words proceeding from the mouth of God²."

The element in man's threefold being—that of Spirit, which he had just received, linked him on to Angel life; and now the chain of existence in the universe stretched in an unbroken length from the living things that were swarming in the waters to the Angels who beheld the face of God.

But it was something more than the completion of the chain of being which, at the time I speak of, filled the Angels' hearts

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23.

² Deut. viii. 3; Matth. iv. 4.

with joy. Man, the darling of their age-long care, was not only linked on to them, but men and women might hereafter become like to what they were themselves.

The change which had just come about in man promised a relation between him and themselves which should give their affections play—a relation of a kind not known before. Men and women whose schooling on earth they had watched, with whose temptations they had sympathised, might be affiliated into their order and become like them. Here was a new and tender tie—a parentage of a spiritual kind. They might look out upon men and women now and regard them as beings who possibly might abide with them for ever; and they might be bound to those, over whose earthly troubles they had watched with anxious care, by a sort of spiritual kinship which should brighten Heaven with a new delight. This it was that made the “Morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God to shout for Joy.”

There is nothing that men and women can so little keep to themselves as Joy; it *will* run over, and it pleases them better the

wider and farther it flows. They seek on all sides those to whom they may say "Rejoice with us." It is a happy thing that it is so, and with Angels this craving is intensified more than I can describe. These Angels therefore who had caught the Great News—that God had breathed into man's heart the Spirit which gave him capacity for knowledge of Himself—at once looked eagerly round to see if there were any to whom they could carry the tidings. They turned to company after company, but all had been as well aware of the doings upon earth as they themselves, and it was not easy to find any whom they might gladden with the great news. At last they bethought them of a company who had somewhat fallen from their first estate, and had become isolated from the Host of Heaven.

"It must not be supposed," said the voice from whom this narrative came, "that Angels are all alike. Each individual existence that comes from God is a thing apart, it is itself and nothing else. You will no more find two Angels exactly alike than you can find two leaves on a tree in all respects the same.

Angels, too, can go wrong if they like to do so ; if they could not, there would be no moral significance in their going right. Such of your temptations as come of the body, of course we do not know, but we are liable to jealousy and self-regard, besides many failings that you would not understand." After this word of preface the tale went on. How I came to hear it all, and in what way it was delivered, I am, as depositaries of great secrets say, "bound by imperative considerations not to reveal."

A few ages back a certain Angel band took it ill that others had been given charges which they thought more important than what fell to them ; and as soon as they began to think about themselves and cherish grievances, somehow their sensibility began to decline ; they grew out of touch first with this and then with that, and by degrees they lost cognisance of much that went on in the universe. It was of this, so to say, outlying company, that the Blessed Angels bethought themselves at last.

Forthwith they put themselves in communication with them and told them the

whole story of organic life as it had been developed upon the Earth.

Here again a word or two of explanation interrupted the narration.

"The whole of Space," said the voice, "as you men have of late been allowed to perceive, is replete with a celestial ether. This was the first thing God made ; by means of this medium forces act and communication is carried on ; when it is ruffled in one way there is Light, when set in motion in other manners it conveys Electricity and other influences for some of which you have as yet no names. It is by means of vibrations transmitted by this ether that we Angels hold converse one with another, that is why I speak of it now. What you know as sound, coming of pulsations of atmospheric air, belongs to earth."

When the Blessed Angels had told their tale none of those signs appeared, which bethoken with Heavenly beings what answers to acclaim among the sons of men. Their hearers gave no sign of joy ; for some time all was still and the disappointed messengers found all blank and chill. After a time

there was a certain rustle as of Spirits communing together, and then an answer came, which, translated into words, is this.

“We cannot but take it ill of you brother Angels that, when you might have brought us so much intelligence that we should have been glad to hear, you only bring us this incredible tale. You tell us of mind being blended with matter, and that this matter is moved by the mind; but mind and matter are in their nature essentially distinct, and like can only act upon like; therefore the will, which is spirit, can no more act upon the limbs of animals which, you tell us, are made of lime and other matter, than we, by our combined volition, could draw one of the meteors that whirl in the nebulae a hair’s breadth out of its course. Men and women and birds and beasts and all the rest that you tell of, exist nowhere but in your own distempered minds. What you talk of is inconceivable, indeed it involves self-contradictions. We can hardly think that you believe this story yourselves; we should suppose it meant as a pleasantry; only it is strange that you seem so much in earnest

about it ; and we fear that you may have got possessed with this idea and have dwelt on it so long that you fancy it to be real ; if this is the case, we warn you of a danger threatening your spiritual health.

“ As for ourselves, we experience, as you have heard, some difficulty in keeping up our communications with portions of the universe. This comes most probably of some fault in the ether, some irregularity of density which impedes transmission. The defect is worse in some directions than in others, but we have not yet succeeded in determining exactly where this break in uniformity occurs. We are sure that the defect is not in ourselves, for our faculties are brighter than ever. This comparative seclusion of ours, indeed, is not without compensation ; by means of our long leisure we have arrived at larger and deeper views of the Laws of the Universe than we had before. No intervention of the Deity that is arbitrary and unprecedented is admissible in a rational scheme. The Universe, once set going, has worked itself out by forces whose operation we understand. What you now tell us would over-set all continuity, all

uniformity, and would outrage Laws which are inviolable, if anything can be so.

“This conception of yours cannot possibly be entertained; it is as repugnant to the Laws of Thought as to all observed Laws. It would be an endless matter to point out separately the incoherencies of what you relate. We reject the story, absolutely upon the broad grounds I have stated, and only touch on a point or two of the details in the hope to free you from the delusion with which you are possessed. You tell us of Birth and Death, strange and wild ideas. The lower animals of whom you speak do not, it seems, know that they will die, but the men and women, of whom you make so much, must, through their short space of life, be always having Death before their eyes. Now, what would our own existence be worth if we were always looking forward to Death? Should we not be stunned into apathy? If we could not see the fruit of our undertakings should we ever set any on foot?

“You talk, indeed, of the perpetuation of what you call ‘a species,’ as though this were some kind of set-off for the brief life of each

creature in itself; but a species can have no personality and no consciousness, and cannot possibly therefore be gratified by existing. You speak of an instinct that makes for the preservation of race, but no motive is adduced on which that instinct can be based. What comfort can it be to the creature who dies, to think that his species goes on when he can know nothing about it? What can he care about descendants whom he will never see? Again, it seems to us that this infinite variety of modes of reproduction of which you speak, and this endless multiplication of forms of existence, betoken an imagination that you have suffered to run wild. God's ways are always simple, and, for the most part, uniform. There is one best way, and to that He keeps; while, in the world you talk about, there is a perfect wantonness of diversity. Again, we do not see how your men and women maintain their personality. You say that the matter of a man's body and brain changes from day to day: this body is part of himself—, how then can he be quite the same person one day, that he was the day before? The shifting particles of these human bodies

are, it seems, supplied by something which you call 'food,' and the means by which the individual appropriates this 'food' you speak of as 'eating and drinking.' Of this we can form no idea. The occasions for it however must terribly interfere with any sustained process of arduous thought.

"Since circumstances have put difficulties in the way of our study of the outer world, we have turned our thoughts to our own minds, and to the great phenomena of Universal Existence. Viewing things by the light of a new idea, we now demand to see a *purpose* in the course of events. I recollect that in the old days, when we were all together, each event seemed to stand by itself and be its own end; every act brought its own satisfaction, and we never asked unto what it led; it carried with it a certain good, and, seeing this, we were content to rest. But we have got beyond this now. We take longer views; and have learned to ask of everything, What is the good of it? What is it for? Towards what end does it bring us? How far forward does it set us on the way?

“Now, about a final purpose in this world of yours you have dropped but one word, and the result you speak of is incommensurate with the vast and complex machinery you introduce. These men and women who shall be accounted worthy, may, you tell us, some day wear the likeness of Angels themselves. Out of your finite world some may pass into the infinite, into immortality. Here is indeed a result, only, as I have said, it is inadequate; and if God had desired to increase the number of Angels, would He have employed this new and circuitous plan? Would He not have made others as He made us? Will the new Angels be better or happier for recollecting the ills they have gone through upon earth? And if they do not recollect them, they might as well not have known them at all. You tell us that this earth you speak of is beheld and known by myriads besides yourselves, who will bear witness of the truth of what you say. But what difference can the number of witnesses make when a thing is impossible on *a priori* grounds? No such thing as the animal life you describe can possibly exist, for Spirit and gross matter cannot

be brought into union. That earth itself that you speak of may, possibly, be imaginary. Some of us recollect seeing what you call the sun ; but the earth has not been noticed, and its orbit lies in the direction where the ether is most disturbed. Thus the flaw in our communications prevents us from readily satisfying ourselves, by inspection, as to the fact of which you speak ; but we should hardly care to do so, for our grounds of rejection are such as to supersede observation. We suspect that what you tell us, if indeed it is seriously meant, is an illusion ; if so, it will be bad for you to dwell on these ideas. We counsel you to dismiss them from your minds, and we hope for your speedy restoration to perfect mental health."

So saying, the spokesman stopped. From time to time, at the most effective points of his speech a coruscation had appeared here and there ; and when he finished, a bright auroral glow gleamed all around and streams of electric light radiated from over-head. This, I found, betokened applause.

For a time the Angels of God held their peace. It is not the way with them to en-

gage in argument about facts of a positive nature "on *a priori* grounds." A slight ripple was observable where their presence was supposed to be, answering, I was told, to a smile passing over the countenance of human auditors. As they departed they said "Come and see¹." The parley ceased, the auroral flashes in that quarter of the heavens gradually died away, serenity again reigned, and all was still.

¹ John i. 46.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

NOTE A.

CHAPTER I., p. 14.

ON "INFINITE" AND "INFINITESIMAL" MAGNITUDES.

I RECOLLECT that these phrases grew into more distinct meaning in my mind after I had seen how infinite quantities were dealt with in mathematics. This advantage may easily be brought within reach ; and, since the ideas come before us in this book, a few words about them will not be out of place.

We will begin with one sort of magnitude, *length* ; that is to say, we will first think of a straight line. When it has two ends it can be measured, and is called *finite* ; and if we mark off two such lines, we can say that one is longer or shorter than the other, or that they are equal ; but we can say nothing of this kind if the lines in question have *not* two ends. If two lines have each one end on the paper and are supposed to go off to infinity (in one direction), then we have an end to measure *from*, but none to measure *to*. If we cut off so many inches or feet or miles from the beginning of one of our lines,

we cannot say that what is left is shorter than it was before we cut the bit off; it is still of infinite length, and that is all we can say about it. In the same way if we had added on so many inches or yards or miles, we could not properly say that we had increased the length. The notion of length belongs to the world of things finite, out of which, when we contemplate infinity we suppose ourselves to have escaped.

Instead of considering length, we may take duration of time. The results will be similar. Infinite time is Eternity, and we are no nearer the end of this now than we were a million years ago; so that if one being gifted with eternal life had then come into existence, while another such began to live to-day, we could not say that one would have more of existence than the other.

Hence, what is finite and what is infinite cannot be brought into the same account. The finite is subject to measurement and the rules of arithmetic, and the infinite is not; and as soon as an infinite quantity appears in any problem, the jurisdiction of the above rules is ousted, and finite quantities disappear by comparison. We own that the power of God is not increased or diminished by its being either supported or opposed by that of hundreds of millions of men. God's attributes being infinite, we cannot suppose them increased or diminished by anything that finite beings can add or take away.

An infinitesimal quantity is one which by constant subdivision or some other process has been made as near nothing as it can be, to exist at all. We cannot speak of it as having magnitude, but *existence it has*.

You may halve a quantity, and again halve one of the halves, and so on, but if you go on for ever you will never reduce the quantity to nothing; there was always something for you to halve and half of that something remains. When any kind of quantity is thus diminished, people constantly say that it *dies away into nothing*. But it does not become *nothing* in the sense of being *non-existent*; it only becomes infinitesimal in point of *magnitude*. If it went out of existence, the *last step* from existence to non-existence would be a tremendous jump; in fact, the passage from something to nothing, or from being alive to becoming dead matter, is a change not of degree but of kind.

NOTE B.

P. 28. "I have never met with anyone who could form any idea of existence when his personality was diffused."

What I meant by this was, that a man could not suppose himself to be animating more bodies than one, or to be attending alike to many different sets

of circumstances, at the same time. Where his attention is, there he is.

That God is as much in any one place as in any other, is a proposition that we accept as one of the aspects of His incomprehensibility, but we cannot imagine that such a mode of being should ever be our own.

I recollect a little girl being asked "How she would like to be a regiment of horse?" With a true instinct she saw and repelled the attack on her personality. "But I could not be a regiment, you know"—was her answer—"one man (interrogatively), or one horse?" No, nothing but a regiment would do; whereupon the young lady closed the discussion by observing very sensibly that we philosophers were talking nonsense.

Although we cannot conceive ourselves broken up and distributed in several bodies, yet in morbid states of the nerve system, it is very possible for people to be persuaded that two or three personalities are housed in their single frame.

The Demoniac in the country of the Gadarenes says, "My name is Legion, for we are many" (Mark v. 9). Anyone who has been conversant with asylums, will be confident that he had the actual words of a lunatic here; they must have been, in the first instance, set down by a hearer. No one had ever heard of double consciousness in our Lord's time; and no one who drew from imagination would

have been likely to have hit upon a detail which is psychologically so true.

NOTE C. p. 34.

I should have been more strictly correct, if instead of saying "the canonical books," I had said "The Pentateuch, the historical scriptures prior to the Captivity and the older prophets."

For in the book of Job, the book of Daniel, and possibly in some others, the Angels are represented, not indeed as possessing power in their own right, but as having, apparently, a commission from the Almighty of wide extent; whereas in the rest of the Old Testament they appear to be specially charged with respect to every act they are directed to perform.

In Job xxxiii. 23, 24, we have

"If there be with him an Angel, an interpreter, one among the thousand to shew unto man what is right for him, then he is gracious unto him."

Here the Angel seems to exercise his protection at his own discretion. It may be noted also that the Angels are often designated in the book of Job, not by the name belonging to the office of messenger, but by a term implying nearness to God; they are called the "Sons of God." (See also Psalm xxix. 1.)

In the book of Daniel we read of Michael "The great prince which standeth for the children of the people," as though he were regarded as the guardian in ordinary, and defender of the Israelites as a nation. (The name Michael = who is like unto God ?) This is quite foreign to what we find in the earlier books of scripture.

I find in Daniel, an expression which appears to fall in with my notions, about the witness function of Angels, but I do not attach much weight to an isolated text.

In the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel iv. 13, we have "I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and behold *a watcher and an holy one* came down from heaven."

Curiously also, in the Greek version of the book of Enoch, Angels are called "Egregori," watchers. In the Apocryphal books Angels are made to perform very various functions. The Angel Raphael (Raphael = The healing of God) is sent to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and he acts as guide and guardian to Tobias. His parting words are these (Tobit xii. 19—21): "All these days I did appear unto you; but I did neither eat nor drink but ye did see a vision. Now therefore give God thanks; for I go up to him that sent me; but write all things which are done in a book. And when they arose, they saw him no more." Compare with v. 19, Genesis xviii. 8, xix. 3; Judges xiii. 16.

"The names of the Angels were brought from Babylon, and with the names not a few of the notions regarding them." So says Dr Edersheim in the beginning of his remarks on Jewish Angelology in his work on "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah." Vol. II. Appendix 13.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV., p. 105.

One instance of an apparent deliverance such as I have in mind is very well known, owing to its being found in Macaulay's sketch of the life of Lord Clive. It is as follows: "Twice, when residing in the Writer's Buildings (in the Madras Presidency) he attempted to destroy himself; and twice the pistol which he snapped at his own head failed to go off. This circumstance, it is said, affected him, as a similar escape is said to have affected Wallenstein. After satisfying himself that the pistol was really loaded, he burst forth into an exclamation that surely he was reserved for something great."

The story about Wallenstein is this. He was then, it is said, a page in the service of the Count of Burgau at Innsbruck. "He had one day, as the tale goes, fallen asleep near an open window in the third story of the castle. Frightened by a dream he threw himself over the parapet but escaped unhurt, a circumstance that was looked upon as a miracle and

universally ascribed to the direct interposition of the Virgin. He came to himself, as they express it, and learned to repent. * * * It became from that moment the study of his life to penetrate into futurity, and to discover the high destiny that awaited him."

The above is from the "Life of Wallenstein," by Col. Mitchell, who throws doubt on the whole story.

It is said that John Wesley was influenced all his life by his recollection of having been saved as a child of six years old from the burning of his father's parsonage at Epworth. Immediately after he was rescued the roof fell in. This escape is said to explain a device in a print of John Wesley engraved in 1745. It represents a house in flames with this text from Zechariah iii. 2, "Is he not a brand plucked from the burning?"

NOTE TO CHAPTER V.

P. 138. "I like to think, when I see what is beautiful that a number of Angels are enjoying it too."

Beauty, they tell me, is a kind of conformity between certain outward objects and an inward sense, and I must be content to leave the subject there. The eye, by means of the optic nerve, and a portion of the brain which is its appanage, possesses

us of beauty, just as the ear and its belongings reveal to us tune. The sense of beauty, the capacity, that is, of regarding a thing as beautiful or ugly, may be common to Angels and ourselves, only they exercise a surer judgment than we do about what is beautiful.

When the crystal first shot into shape, there could be none but heavenly beings to appreciate its lustre or its form.

When I meet with the outward makings of beauty, I look round for a perceiver by whom the beauty may be realised and enjoyed.

In the beauty of animals there are many "why's and wherefore's" unexplained. A point that has struck me is this.

The few living things that are ugly hide themselves under the earth or the sea. The want of light may explain their being dingy, but why are some of them repulsive in *form*, while those that are commonly in sight are all elegant in shape? A mole cricket is comically ugly but he is hardly ever seen. Earthworms and centipedes keep out of our notice as much as they can. The unsightly kinds of fish—rays and the lump fish for instance—live at the bottom, while those that swim near the surface, like mackerel, are beautiful both in colour and form. The horrible octopus hides himself in holes in the rocks, but his near relation, the "little nautilus" of Pope, who is just as hideous in body, likes to show himself on the surface of the Mediterranean, and then he

hides his unseemly, molluscous person in a pearly car of exquisite fabric and of the daintiest form. All this may be understood by the naturalist, but if I set people at large enquiring about it I shall not do any harm.

NOTE TO APOLOGUE

A leading difference between spiritual existence, as it is conceived by metaphysicians, and our own mode of being, lies in what are called "the fundamental conditions of our perceptions." What this means I will try to explain.

It is taken for granted in the Apologue, that the reader understands the Angels to be, as metaphysicians would say, "free from the conditions of Space and Time." A few words on the subject may help to show the reader what is intended by this.

Existence on a globe of a certain size, taking so many hours to turn on its axis, is necessarily dominated by relations of Space and Time. All human ways of thinking are fashioned by these conditions, and those of the Angels are not. They must have apprehended these notions of Space and Time when they saw bodies at different distances apart, or moving at different rates, but in their own angelic lives and consciousness such notions play but little part. Time to the Angels is of no more account than money was

to Fortunatus, whose purse was always full. Their mental vision would need adjustment to enable them to understand how the idea of Time influences the moral acts and judgments of men.

Human beings seem to be always listening for some clock to strike; sometimes they are in a fever of anxiety, lest it should strike before they have got done what they are about; and sometimes they are in a fever of impatience waiting for something to happen. But both human anxiety and human impatience must, to the Angels, be subjects for curious observation, as emotions proper to another class of beings. They must regard them as affections peculiar to creatures who are cramped in a bowlful of Space and who only exist for a twinkle of Time.

Again, we can hardly say that in this life of ours there is such a thing as a *present* time, for the present is gone by, before we can grasp it, and we ourselves are changing while it goes. There is, as we were long ago told, no such a thing with us as *being*, but only a constant *becoming* something different from what we were just now. But with Angels existence is one continuous present state of *being*. They can spread out the past before them as we should unfold a map; and in certain permitted directions they may possibly look forward now and then, and behold the future so vividly that what is going to happen may for them be as real as though it had actually come about.

I take another point; in all our movements from spot to spot on earth, we consider how long it will take us to go so far; that is to say, motion involves the ideas of Space and Time. But with Angels, as I conceive them, this is not the case. They transport themselves by an act of will, as we sometimes seem to do in our dreams; and they are present wherever they like, that is to say, they can direct their attention to any occasion that occurs. This brings me to note a point in which relations of the visits to earth of superhuman beings, as recorded in works of imagination, usually differ from Scriptural accounts.

If we are told anything about an Angel's journey from Heaven; if he takes days and nights to fall; if he speeds through space, passing flaming worlds upon his way; if he spies the earth as a ball, growing into beauty as he draws near it; then we may be sure he is the Angel of poetry or of fiction, not of the Canonical Scriptures.

INDEX-SUMMARY OF THE ANGELOLOGY.

It may serve the reader's convenience, if I put together a sort of index-summary of such statements about Angels as I have ventured to make. "Angelology" is too grand a name for them, but I cannot find a simpler one that will serve.—I need not refer to every occasion on which the dominant ideas appear; one or two references will, in general, suffice.

I shall for the present confine myself to what rests on Scriptural authority, or at least falls in consistently with what the Bible tells us—

I. As to the nature of Angels, and their modes of being :

Angels rejoice over sinners who repent. pp. 10, 14, 117, 123.

From which I infer (without direct Scriptural warrant) that they grieve over human misery, and evil doing. pp. 13, 14, 133, 161.

Angels serve as witnesses of the beauty of the world. No Scripture warrant. pp. 23, 30, 130—140.

The Angels are immortal. p. 56.

They have a spiritual body. p. 56.

This helps us to conceive their personality. p. 58.

They may centre their attention upon us individually. pp. 15, 58, 117, 137.

Angels do not forget; (this is not stated in Scripture, but I think implied). pp. 116, 122.

They do not foresee the future unless by special revelation. They are therefore capable of surprise. St Mark xiii. 32. p. 124.

A joy with them is the greater for its being unexpected. St Mark xiii. 32. p. 124.

Quotation from Rev. T. Moseley on the Functions of Angels, and of the Word. pp. 130, 131, 184.

Angels (being free and imperfect) may make progress toward perfection, or may deteriorate. (No express authority for this in the four Gospels, but see 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6.) pp. 13, 181, 185, 187. Preface, p. x.

There are myriads of Angels who may survey all the worlds of space. p. 120.

They may attend to the inhabitants of the starry worlds as well as to every being upon earth. p. 121.

We, ourselves, if counted "worthy to attain to that world and the resurrection from the dead" will become "equal unto the Angels." An element in determining such worthiness may be our fitness for sharing Angels' work, and our fitness may be shown by our finding our delight as they do in contemplating and furthering happiness and good. pp. 64, 70, 182. Preface, vi. vii.

There may be a diversity among Angels. pp. 98, 176. (See also Apologue, p. 187.)

There are orders of Angels gifted in different ways. p. 128.

II. On the powers and functions of Angels—

In the Old Testament Angels are messengers and nothing more. (Archbishop Whately.) p. 34.

No formal account of them is given in Scripture. p. 36.

There is no warrant for supposing that Angels exercise independent powers either over nature or over men, but I suppose them by *permission* to whisper thoughts to men. pp. 37, 103, and Preface, pp. xi. xii.

There is no authority for believing that Angels know the secrets of men's hearts. pp. 124, 129.

They do not foresee all the future. (See St Mark xiii. 32.) p. 124.

An Angel is given a particular commission for every act he performs on behalf of God; but he carries on perception as a function belonging to the essence of his existence. pp. 38, 65, 114.

Doctrine of guardian Angels. pp. 97, 102.

(Note from Cardinal J. de V. Cafetan, p. 100.) Guardianship not particular but collective.

Children's Angels. "Beholding the Father's face;" what this means. p. 103.

Angels are represented (St Luke xxiv. 6, 7) as calling things to the remembrance of those whom they address.

I suppose Angels to drop thoughts into people's minds, which thoughts may be entertained or not, at the hearer's will. Preface, pp. xi. xii. pp. 163, 184.

The Angels are spoken of as having a Glory of their own. (Luke ix. 26.) p. 39.

It will be their duty to gather the "elect from the four winds." It is they who are to "sever the wicked from among the righteous" (Matth. xiii. 49). p. 174.

On the ministering functions of Angels, see p. 103.

Our Lord often represents God as acting, not immediately, by the fiat of His will, but through agents and instruments. Angels may be among such instruments.

It was through "Legions of Angels," and not by the simple exercise of the Divine volition, that the Father, if Christ had prayed for it, would have sent Him help. Matth. xxvi. 53. pp. 19, 182.

When we quit the domain of Scriptural authority we enter on a region that is wide and almost trackless. Such guidance as we can get in our explorations comes either from metaphysical considerations, such as I have touched upon in the note to the Apologue, or from moral speculations. The function which I attribute to Angels, of transforming the unconscious happiness that exists in the world into conscious happiness of their own, rests only on such grounds. See Preface, pp. vii. viii. pp. 4, 7, 9, 11, 21, 24, 133, 136.

Angel perception gives reality and permanence to phenomena. pp. 18, 109, 122, 180.

The main argument, independent of revelation, for the existence of intermediate intelligences, is drawn from the analogy of the natural world, in which continuity seems to be the law. They bridge the chasm which would otherwise exist between Man and God. The question "what is the force of this argument from analogy?" will be answered differently, according as we suppose that there is one designing mind, tending to dispose things always in the one best way,—which way, when men discern it, they call a Law—or that the course of nature is otherwise determined. See pp. 120, 192, 194, 223.

The above may serve as a compendium to show what my notions about Angels are: whether accepted or not, they may turn people's thoughts to the points.

The following books treating of Angels are easily accessible. Dr Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Vol. 2. Appendix 13. Longmans. Article "Angels" in Godet's *Biblical Studies* (edited by Rev. W. H. Lyttelton) and the article on Angels by the Rev. E. H. Plumptre, D.D., in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

The work of Archbishop Whately, quoted on p. 84, which contains much that is of interest (more especially the second edition), is not easily met with. I do not name books to which only professed students

would be likely to turn. A list of authorities will be found in the article from the Dictionary above quoted, and in Winer's Real Wörterbuch, Art. Engel.

Additional note. p. 39.

"That delicate sympathy with men and women which Shakespeare, with a true instinct, makes Ariel show."

The following passage was that which was most in my head.

Ariel. * * * Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.

Pros. Dost thou think so, spirit?

Ari. Mine would, sir, were I human.

Pros. And mine shall.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?

Tempest, Act V. Sc. I.

I append an extract from Canon Liddon's University Sermons. 2nd series. p. 152.

"Among the lower creatures man is made for command; and he has had some thousands of years in which to strengthen and extend his empire. But does it therefore follow that there is none above man to whom he stands in a relation somewhat analogous to that in which the lower animals stand towards himself? Is he to suppose that the hierarchy of beings which rises by such gradual steps from the lowest zoophyte to the race of Newton and Shakespeare does in very truth rise no higher; that it stops abruptly at the link which he himself forms, between an animal organism and a personal spirit? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the upward series continues, and that above man there are beings stretching, in rank beyond rank of ascending excellence, upwards towards the throne of the Uncreated and the Eternal? and supposing such beings to exist, as revelation says they do exist, is it not at least conceivable that they do in sundry ways limit our independence, just as we, on our part, interfere with that of creatures below us?"

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